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HARDY ON 1 JOHN.

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THE  
FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE  
OF  
ST JOHN THE APOSTLE,  
UNFOLDED AND APPLIED.

BY  
NATHANAEL HARDY, D.D.

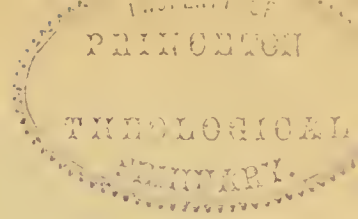
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## NATHANAEL HARDY, D.D.



WHILE introducing to our readers the author of the following Exposition, it may not be out of place to offer a few observations on a subject, respecting which we venture to think that considerable misapprehension exists in the minds of many. We frequently hear and read statements respecting 'the Puritans,' their excellences and their defects, which seem to indicate that many regard them as a class of writers who have little or no resemblance to any others, while they have no material differences amongst themselves; as if they were members of a flock of sheep, all marked with one brand, undistinguishable by any ordinary eye from one another, and altogether unlike the members of any other flock. Now it is no doubt true that modes of speech, and even modes of thought, are to a considerable extent under the influence of circumstances; and consequently there are great features which all the literature of any era has in common, and which distinguish it from that of any other. Such features of course belong to the writers of the Puritan period, producing some measure of mutual resemblance between themselves, and of distinction between all of them and the writers of any other age, as, for example, those of the Reformation, those of the eighteenth century, or those of our own times.

But it may be questioned whether there be any period whose literature is enriched with so much diversity as is that of the age with which we have to do. It was a period of intense earnestness of thought, when men's minds were brought into contact with great interests, and when questions of unspeakable importance were calling for individual solution. It was a period of transition, when speakers and writers were not drilled into absolute uniformity; a period dis severed to a great extent from that which preceded it, when, therefore, traditional forms of thought and speech had less than their usual influence, and when individual peculiarities were more than usually free to assert themselves.

Some of these causes, perhaps, acted still more powerfully at the Reformation; but another circumstance gave greater variety to the writings of the Puritans than belongs even to those of the Reformers. The English Reformers were substantially at one in all important questions; as were also the Germans, until the Sacramentarian controversy unhappily broke out amongst them. Hence their writings generally, and especially those of them that are of much interest to us, contain comparatively little diversity of doctrinal statement. The variety is doubtless great; as between Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Beza, Farel, Cranmer, Latimer; but it is mainly due to the personal temperaments of the several writers, and to the circumstances in which they were placed. The Puritans, on the other hand,

differed from one another both in respect of important doctrines, and in respect of matters of ecclesiastical polity, which are still fresh in interest; and certainly their writings are distinguished, not only by variety of manner, but also by a greater diversity of matter and sentiment than is to be found in the writings of the leaders of the Reformation.

None of the causes to which we have adverted are in as powerful action now as they were in the puritan period; and consequently we venture to assert that there are greater diversities between the different writers of that period than between those of the nineteenth century, whom yet no one would think of classing together on any principle of classification except that of contemporaneousness. For proof of this, we need go no further than to the series of works which we are now engaged in reproducing. We venture to assert that, amongst the religious writers of our own day, it would be impossible to name any that are more dissimilar to each other than are the several members of the following pairs:—Thomas Adams and Thomas Goodwin; Sibbes and Charnock; Ward and Clarkson; Airay and Stock; King and Rainolds; Bernard and Cartwright; Torshell and Fuller. We may even go so far as to state, that some of these writers are so free from the characteristics which are commonly considered as distinctive of the age in which they lived, that their works would not be thought out of place if by any accident they were classed among the products of our own day. A sermon of Charnock's, if delivered in one of our congregations, with only a very few expressions altered, would scarcely startle the hearers, or be detected by them as not a modern production; while we are confident that Torshell's *Exercitation upon Malachi*, if it had been published as a new work, would have been welcomed by many as a fine specimen of the "modern criticism!" A somewhat similar remark, though not to quite the same extent, is applicable to the present exposition of a portion of the First Epistle of St John; and this it is that has suggested to us, and this is our apology for introducing in this place, a discussion which may be thought by some to be unconnected with the business which we have in hand.

That business is not to compile a full biography of Dr Hardy, but only to give such a brief account of his position and sentiments as may cast light upon the views expressed in the following Commentary, and so put the reader in a position to profit fully by its perusal.

NATHANAEL HARDY was born in the Old Bailey, in the parish of St Martin's, London, on the 14th of September 1618, and was baptized in the church of that parish. His father, Anthony Hardy, was probably a citizen of good standing; but we are not possessed of any information respecting him. As our main object in this sketch is to indicate the position which Hardy occupied amongst his contemporaries, it may be well to remind our readers of the relation which subsisted between him and a few of the most distinguished of them in respect of the time of his birth. In 1618, then, James I. was in the fifteenth year of his occupancy of the English throne, and his son, afterwards Charles I., was in the eighteenth year of his age; Oliver Cromwell was nineteen years old; Shakespeare had been dead two years, and Milton was ten years old. Hardy was eighteen years younger than Goodwin, ten years younger than Lord Clarendon, five years younger than Jeremy Taylor, and three years younger than Owen and Baxter, who were born in one year. He was three years older than Clarkson, nine years older than Bunyan, and twelve years older than Howe and Barrow.

The time when Hardy came into the world was pretty nearly coincident with the beginning of the storm which was destined to break over England, and to sweep away the old landmarks in Church and State. His life having been spent in the stirring times of James I., of Charles I., of the Commonwealth, and the Restoration, there is a strong temptation lying

in the way of his biographer, inviting him to enter upon the wide field of discussion as to the interesting events of the time; but over such a temptation we shall not stumble.

We have found no notice of the early education of Hardy until he went to Oxford in 1632. He became a commoner of Magdalene Hall, and continued there for several years 'under the course of a severe discipline,' says Anthony à-Wood in his *Athenæ*; 'Artes et Scientias Academicas viriliter didicit,' says the same writer in his *History and Antiquities*. We understand these expressions to mean substantially the same thing, and that their meaning is, that Mr Hardy was noted as a diligent and hard-working student. And this testimony is all the more valuable, because it is given by one who manifestly dislikes him, and speaks of him as slightingly as he can, consistently with his gruff honesty. After 'some years' residence in Magdalene Hall, he removed to Hart Hall, and, as a student of that hall, he took his degree of M.A. in 1638, having previously, in 1635, taken his bachelor's degree as a student of Magdalene Hall. If we understand Wood aright, he took Deacons' orders immediately on passing M.A., and in the following year, 1639, was admitted to Priests' orders. At all events, he quitted Oxford at this time, and apparently at once became incumbent of St Dionysius Back-Church, London. He became, says the same authority,\* 'a florid and very ready preacher,' *conscionator insignis*.† These two expressions again, taken from the two works named above, appear each to intimate that he was eloquent and popular, while it is sneeringly implied that eloquence and popularity are not the highest qualifications of a preacher.

At this time it is manifest that he had strong leanings towards Presbyterianism, and Wood pretty plainly insinuates that this was because it was most profitable to lean towards that side. Such we understand to be the meaning of the expression, '*At the turn of the times* he was ensnared by the fair pretences of the Presbyterian party.' Now we can see no reason whatever to believe that this insinuation is well-founded. We shall find immediately that he broke with the Presbyterians long before they ceased to be in the ascendant, and that he was a very decided and outspoken Episcopalian for many years before it was advantageous to be such. We are bound in all fairness, therefore, to give him credit for sincerity and honesty, both in his earlier Presbyterian and his later Episcopal sentiments.

According to the statement of Wood, the negotiations between the Royal and the Parliamentary Commissioners at Uxbridge constituted the turning-point in Hardy's history. If it be so, it was the greatest result that issued from them. These negotiations were undertaken, we fear, under false pretences on both sides. Each party seems to have desired to appear anxious for peace, and to have entered upon conference with the determination to make no such concessions as the other party might demand, the object of each being to shift to the other the blame of continuing the war. The Commissioners on either side were partly lay and partly clerical, the clerical apparently having a voice only in matters relating to religion and the Church. It is remarkable that, in the discussions on this subject, the Episcopalians and Presbyterians defended their respective systems on the high ground that they were *jure divino*, each party holding that the other system was not only not so good as their own, but that it was positively evil, and contrary to the direct and positive appointment of God. The chief champions were Alexander Henderson on the Presbyterian, and Dr Henry Hammond on the Episcopalian side. Of course, Clarendon represents all the learning and all the argument to have been on the one side, and nothing but unfounded

\* *Athenæ Oxon.*

† *Hist. et Antiq. Oxon.*



assumption, rhetorical fallacy, and coarse abuse on the other. Be this as it may, we are informed that the argument of Dr Hammond convinced Hardy, who happened to be present, although he was not a commissioner on either side, of the erroneousness of the Presbyterian system, and made him ever after a strenuous Episcopalian. On his return home, he immediately preached a sermon of recantation, and as we shall see in the sequel, he was henceforth not only a steadfast but a high churchman.

Now, with reference to the insinuation repeatedly made by Wood, that Hardy's changes of view had reference to 'the turns of the times,' and to self-interest, it ought to be remembered that this took place in 1644-5, a time when the parliamentary interests were still gaining, certainly at least not losing, ground. Of course, different readers will have different opinions as to the strength or weakness of mind indicated by a conversion so effected, but we can see no reasonable ground to doubt the sincerity of it.

As an Episcopalian, then, Hardy continued to minister in St Dionysius Back-Church, but Wood informs us that his congregation consisted to a greater extent of Presbyterians than of Episcopalians. If this were so, it is certainly a high tribute to the personal worth and ministerial qualifications of the man. It could have been nought but these that induced his Presbyterian parishioners to adhere to him; and it must have been a tie of wondrous strength which attached them to him, or it would have been snapped by his defection at such a time. All will admit that this was highly creditable to *him*, while there will be different opinions as to how far *they* were right in allowing personal attachments or individual qualifications to lead them to lend their countenance to a system of which they disapproved.

This state of matters appears to have continued all through the period of the Commonwealth. On the death of the king, Hardy preached a funeral sermon, and duly on the anniversary of the day on which the black scaffold was reared at Whitehall, the 'royal martyrdom' was commemorated and lamented in the Church of St Dionysius by a High Church Episcopal clergyman, in the presence of a mixed congregation of Episcopalians and Presbyterians, the latter being the majority. Regularly he kept up a 'Loyal Lecture,' at which collections were made for the relief of the deprived clergy; and yet it does not appear that the slightest molestation was given to him who acted in this manner. A-Wood is puzzled to account for this phenomenon, and asks how it could be that he should have been so faithful to his convictions, and yet should have been let alone; and is manifestly disposed to set aside the unexceptionable testimony which he adduces for the facts, on the ground of the improbability of the matters attested. We have heard a great deal of the intolerance of the dominant party, and of the summary and arbitrary proceedings of Cromwell's 'Expurgators;' but surely the single fact of Hardy's being suffered to retain his benefice, and to speak his mind with perfect freedom concerning the conduct of the Parliament, and openly to collect money from month to month for the relief of the sufferers in the king's cause, indicates an amount of moderation which is to us wonderful—as to Anthony à-Wood it was absolutely incredible. We doubt not that there were cases of hardship involved in the proceedings of the Expurgators; but the fact that, in the heart of London, Mr Hardy was permitted to preach the doctrine of Episcopacy by divine right, and of the sin of regicide, in the presence of a congregation consisting to a large extent of Presbyterians, indicates that the severity of the Expurgators was leavened with a great and admirable amount of forbearance.

When at last it was resolved to place Charles II. on the throne of his fathers, the city of London resolved to send a large deputation to meet him at the Hague. This deputation



consisted of fourteen of the most substantial citizens, and was accompanied by eight or ten clergymen, of whom Lord Clarendon names Reynolds, Calamy, Case, and Manton. Amongst these clergymen was Hardy, and he was probably the most acceptable to the king of them all; for while the Presbyterians assured him of their most devoted loyalty, they strove hard to dissuade him from the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the surplice, at least in his own chapel. Hardy of course did not join in such attempts, and this may have been the reason why he was selected, as he appears to have been, to preach before the King and Court on the 20th of May. A-Wood, who seems to be determined to admit no good of Hardy, pretty plainly insinuates that he 'improved the occasion' to advance his own interests. But surely the stedfastness with which he had adhered to the Royal and Episcopal cause through the long dark night ought to free him from the imputation of worshipping the rising sun only because it was rising.

In point of fact, however, as might have been expected, the rays of that sun did fall upon him, to his no small delectation and profit. He was immediately appointed one of the royal chaplains, and seems ever after to have been a frequent preacher in the Chapel Royal. He was reinstated in the cure of St Dionysius Back-Church. He was created Doctor of Divinity by the University of Oxford, became vicar of St Martins in the Field, Westminster, archdeacon of Lewes and dean of Rochester, also rector of Henley, in Oxfordshire. Thus he was manifestly one of the most rising men in the church, and would probably soon have been invested with the Episcopal dignity.

But the sunshine of royal favour does not appear to have induced him in any degree to relax his diligence in preaching and doing the work of his pastoral office. Thus he went on for ten years, and 'on or about' the 1st of June 1670 he died, in the 52d year of his age. He was buried in the chancel of St Martins in the Field, Westminster. There his widow erected a monument with the following epitaph:—

*Heic, lector, quicquid mortale habuit deposuit Nathanael Hardy, S.T.D., Ecclesie Roffensis Decanus, verbi divini fidus et strenuus administer. Primum apud S. Dionysii apud cives Londonenses, deinde et Divi Martini apud Wesmonasterienses, utriusque urbis populo carus pariter ac verendus, talem nam præstabant solidum judicium, expromptu memoria, animus indefessus, assidua exercitatio, methodus facilis, sensus accommodus, verborum copia, vox sonora; omnes eæ dotes quibus instructus operam suam et Deo et gregi egregie probavit, quum per annos xxxii sacram provinciam concionibus, curis, vigiliis, quibus semet exhaustit, implexisset, in caros præmature accitus (quo tot animas suo ductu præiisse viderat, tot vidit secuturos) civicam coronam adeptus est, anno salutis MDCLXX., ætatis lii. Tu, lector, quod te vivus pro rostris edocuit frequens, quod jam vel ex cippo mortuus te admonet, æternitatem cogita. Posuit mærens conjux.*

Anthony à-Wood states that his funeral sermon was preached by Dr Patrick, bishop of Ely, from 2 Cor. v. 1. On this his editor, Dr Bliss, remarks that "Wood does not seem apprised of another funeral sermon on Hardy by Dr Richard Meggot, rector of St Olave's, Southwark, and chaplain in ordinary to the King." Thus Wood speaks of one funeral sermon, by Patrick; Bliss of two, by Patrick and Meggot respectively. The recent edition of Bishop Patrick's works contains a sermon on 2 Cor. v. 1, preached on occasion of the funeral of Thomas Grigg, 4th September 1670; and the editor, Mr Taylor, states that Mr Knight, who left a MS. life of Bishop Patrick, erroneously asserts that the sermon on that text was preached at the funeral of Hardy. It would appear then, at first sight, that Wood and Bliss were both in error, the one in supposing that *the* funeral sermon, the other that *a* funeral sermon, on Hardy, was preached by Bishop Patrick. But in the sermon preached on the occasion of the funeral of Mr Grigg, we find that the preacher, after dividing his subject into

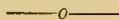
three heads, says, "Of the two first I have discoursed elsewhere, upon the like occasion with this that hath now brought us together." This was preached on the 4th September 1670, and Dean Hardy had been buried on the 9th of June in the same year. It seems therefore impossible to doubt that this was the occasion on which the bishop had preached from the same text, that consequently the editor of Wood is right, and the editor of Bishop Patrick is wrong, and his edition defective in not containing this sermon, which Wood states was extant in his day, an expression which we suppose to mean that it was published, especially as he adds, that in the sermon "*You may see his character at large.*"

It is almost amusing to see the persistency with which Wood strives to prevent his readers from drawing an inference favourable to Hardy from the facts which his instinctive honesty compels him to record. Almost the last sentence of his notice is, "At length this active and forward man, who had little or no character among the true royalists, especially that part of the clergy who had suffered in the times of usurpation, giving way to fate in his house at Croydon, in Surrey, on 1st June 1670, was buried on the 9th in the chancel of St Martin's in the Fields." Now surely the fact of his having been the dear friend of Bishop Patrick is amply sufficient answer to this charge, for a charge it is, implying that Hardy was a time-server, and that he secured his safety in the "times of usurpation" by keeping his loyalty in the background.

The publications of Hardy were numerous, but none of them, excepting the Exposition of the First Epistle of John, were fitted to be of more than local and temporary interest. This exposition, which we now reprint, is only a fragment. It was intended to consist of five parts, corresponding generally to the five chapters of the epistle; but only two of them were accomplished. We shall be greatly disappointed if our readers do not acknowledge that the sermons now presented to them are of great excellence. In matter, they are purely evangelical; in spirit, they are earnest and affectionate; in manner, they are eloquent and impressive. They have been held in high repute by students for nearly two centuries; and the volumes containing them have long been eagerly sought after by book-collectors. In editing them, we have not always been able to introduce into the typography an accurate distinction of divisions and subdivisions, but have frequently followed the original edition, in which the distinction is not observed. In respect of the language, we have done our best, as usual, to reproduce the original text. If there be any deviation from it, of which we are not aware, it is the effect of accident, not of design.

For the benefit of such readers as are not familiar with the language of the period, we may state that they will constantly meet with expressions in which they will suppose that a *not* has been omitted. We refer to such expressions as "not good, but evil, useful, but hurtful," in which the negation of the former clause is to be understood as casting its influence over the latter; very much as critics explain the Latin phrase, *non modo, sed ne quidem*, which so often occurs in Livy, when we should have expected *non modo non, sed ne quidem*. We refer to this small matter here, because, while the form in question occasionally occurs in all the writers of the period, we have not found it so frequently in any other of them as in Hardy, and because a reader who might not be aware of what we have stated as to the *usus loquendi*, would probably suspect a misprint in many passages where none occurs.

## DEDICATION OF PART I.\*



AQUILÆ, THEOLOGI  
CHRISTO DISCIPULI CONJUNCTISSIMI,  
FIDEI MARTYRIS INCRUENTI,  
CHARITATIS PRÆCONIS,  
ECCLESLE INSIGNIS COLUMNÆ,  
D. JOHANNIS APOSTOLI,

PERSPICACI MYSTÆ,  
SERVO FIDELI,  
CONFESSORI INVICTO,  
SPECTATISSIMO EXEMPLO,  
REVERENDO PATRI,  
JOHANNI D<sup>NO</sup> EPISCOPO ROFFENSI,

IN PRIMAM EPISTOLAM HAS COMMENTARIORUM PRIMITIAS

D.D. N. H.

IN PERPETUUM GRATI ANIMI TESTIMONIUM :

Obnixè rogans τὸν ποιμένα ἢ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν Ψυχῶν, ut et illi res omne genus prosperas, et Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, ærumnis et erroribus (heu!) penè obrutæ, antiquam veritatem et splendorem pristinum, pro summa sua misericordiâ largiri velit.

\* The Editor hopes to be excused for submitting the following translation, or imitation in English, of this inscription:—

Upon the first epistle  
of him who was  
The eagle, the Divine,  
Christ's—best-beloved disciple,  
The faith's—unbloody martyr,  
Of charity—the preacher,  
The church's—noted pillar,  
ST JOHN THE APOSTLE,

This first part of his commentaries  
to him who is  
The clear-sighted expounder,  
—faithful servant,  
—dauntless confessor,  
—the most honoured example,  
—reverend father,  
JOHN LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,

NATHANAEL HARDY dedicates,  
for a perpetual token of  
gratitude :

Earnestly beseeching the Shepherd or bishop of souls that it may please him of his great mercy both upon him to bestow prosperity in all things ; and upon the Church of England, well-nigh overwhelmed (alas!) with calamities and with errors, her ancient truth and her former splendour.



## DEDICATION OF PART II.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY CHRISTIAN, COUNTESS DOWAGER OF DEVONSHIRE.

—o—

MADAM, I find this holy apostle directing his second epistle to an elect lady (2 John 1), whereby he conferred no small honour upon her; I am bold to dedicate this second part of my weak labours on his first epistle to your Ladyship, as esteeming it, and that justly, a great honour to me.

St John dignifieth the person to whom he wrote with the title of a lady. It seemeth he was of another spirit than our levelling Quakers, who, denying a civil difference of superior and inferior, refuse to give those respects, both in gestures and titles, which are due to some above others. And as he calleth her a lady, in reference to her external quality, so an elect lady, in regard of her choice internal qualifications, as being, to use St Jerome's\* language, concerning a prime lady in Rome, *Non minus sanctitate quam genere nobilis*, no less good than great.

An amiable sight it is when these two entwine each other. Piety in a mean one is like a mine of gold in the earth; nobility in a bad one is like a blazing comet in the air; but piety in a noble person is like a bright star in the heavens. Honour without virtue is as a cloud without water; virtue without honour is as a room without hangings; but virtue and honour is as a golden apple in a silver picture, or rather as a precious diamond in a golden ring. Both these were conspicuous in St John's elect lady, and I may no less truly say, are met together in you.

Should I give the world a true account of those intellectual, moral, and spiritual endowments which God hath conferred upon your honour, I easily believe (what St Jerome† saith in reference to a noble lady, *Si quæcumque virtutibus ejus congrua divero, adulari putabor*) I shall be censured as a flatterer. Besides (to speak St Ambrose‡ his phrase in an epistle to the same lady), I am justly fearful, *Ne verecundiæ tuæ onerosa foret etiam vera laudatio*, lest I offend your

\* Hieron. Ep. ad Demetri.

† Id Ibid.

‡ Ambrose Ep. ad Demetri.

ladyship's modesty by expressing a character of your worth, though never so consonant to truth. I foresee also how needless any encomium will be of your merit; the lives of great persons being, as cities built upon an hill, generally obvious. I am withal sufficiently sensible what an arrogance it is, *ut tuis prædicationibus ingenium meum par esse præsumam* (as the same father in the same epistle elegantly), that I should think my rude pencil fit to draw the lineaments of your better part; upon all which considerations I have resolved against that common custom of a panegyric.

Only, after St John's pattern, 2 John 5, I beseech you (Madam) that you would abound yet more in all virtue, so as the light of your good works may shine more and more to the perfect day. To this end let those excellent counsels which are given by him in this chapter, and though I cannot say fully, yet I dare say faithfully, expounded by me in this book, be firmly engraven upon your noble breast.

Account it your highest honour (with Mary) to sit (as it were) at Christ's feet, not only that you may hear, but keep, his commandments, and to make good your Christian profession by treading in his footsteps, and walking as he walked.

By employing (as you do) this world's goods for pious, hospitable, and charitable uses, let it appear that you have learned to love your brother, and not to love this world.

Go not forth to those antichristian lying teachers, who by heresy and schism are gone out of the Church of England, that (according to the motto of your honour's arms, *Cavendo tutus*) your precious soul may be still safe from error, by bewareing them and their poisonous doctrines.

Finally, As you know, so abide in him whom you have believed, and let those truths which you have heard from the beginning, and hitherto embraced, abide in you to the end of your life.

I must not (Right Honourable) conclude this epistle



without fulfilling the chief end of its dedication, namely, to confess my obligation and profess my gratitude to your Ladyship for those kind aspects and benign influences which in these black and cloudy days the bright beams of your goodness have vouchsafed (as to many of reverend brethren, so) in particular to myself, the unworthiest of them all.

I have nothing more to add but my devotions. That

the great God would accumulate upon your own person, with all that are descended from and related to you, the blessings of life, health, and wealth, of love, grace, and peace, of joy, bliss, and glory, is and shall be the incessant prayer of, Madam, your honour's greatly obliged and humbly devoted servant,

NATHANAEL HARDY.

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## TO THE READER.

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THIS epistle, which I have undertaken by divine assistance to unfold, is as it were a goodly fabric, consisting of five rooms, being divided into so many chapters. Among those, this second is the most spacious and specious, by reason of which this volume is swelled far bigger than the former. I need not tell thee how well worthy this room is of thy most serious view; thus much I dare assure thee, the more often thou lookest into it, the better thou wilt like it.

At the entrance into it, is as it were the *effigies* of Christ, as an advocate for thy consolation, and a pattern for thy imitation. Towards the further end is the portraiture of antichrist, with all his cursed crew, spitting fire out of their mouths against the holy Jesus, denying him to be the Christ, against whom the apostle giveth a seasonable caveat.

On the right hand hang the lovely pictures of those virgin graces, knowledge, obedience, love of God, and of our neighbour, and perseverance in the faith.

On the left hand are represented those misshapen monsters, of malice and envy, in hating our brother; of worldly love, with all her brats, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, there are in it several partitions (one for fathers, another for young men, and a third for children) for men, for Christians, of all ages and sorts.

These following discourses are as so many windows to let in light to this room, whereby thou mayest the better view it, and whatever is contained in it. I have not made use of painted glass, which, though it may adorn, obscureth, but rather that which is plain and clear, as affecting, not the ostentation of my own wit, in high language, but thy edification, by significant expressions. I have used my utmost care that the several windows might be well leded by a methodical and rational connection. Many flaws thou wilt meet with (some whereof are already observed) which I hope thy candid ingenuity will pardon. That it may please the Father of lights to transmit, through these discourses, some beams of heavenly knowledge into thy soul, is, and shall be, the earnest prayer of him who desireth to live no longer than he may be serviceable to God and the church in his generation.

NATH. HARDY.

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# THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF ST JOHN.

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HISTORY, prophecy, and doctrine, are the three channels in which run the streams of sacred writ, from whence ariseth the division of its books into historical, prophetic, and doctrinal. Not but that all the books of Scripture are doctrinal, in which respect the apostle saith, 2 Tim. iii. 16, it is 'profitable for doctrine;' but because some books are chiefly concerned in narrations of things past, others in the predictions of things to come, and some are chiefly, if not only, conversant about dogmatical truths and practical precepts; they are not unfitly thus distinguished. Of this latter sort are the epistolary writings, and therefore in this regard the fittest to be discussed among the people. The prophetic books are most congruous to the schools, but the doctrinal most suitable to the pulpit; those for exercising the learned, these for feeding the vulgar. Upon this account I have made choice of an epistle, and in particular, not without serious and mature deliberation, nor yet, I hope, without the blessed Spirit's instigation, of this First Epistle general of St John to be the subject of my post-meridian discourses.

If any shall be inquisitive to know why, among all the epistles of the holy apostles, I have pitched my thoughts upon this, I shall return this threefold answer, which as a threefold cord, and that, saith Solomon, Eccles. iv. 12, is not easily broken, induced me to this work.

One, though indeed the least, is, that I find not any English expositor upon it, nor yet many among the Latin, except those who have undertaken comments upon all the epistles; whereas, either in Latin or English, or both, I find several excellent interpreters upon each of the rest; and truly, I shall esteem it an high honour conferred upon me by my God, if, through his gracious enablement, by a (though imperfect) dilucidation of this epistle, I may cast a mite into the church's treasury.

A second and more persuading reason is, the congruency of it to the age wherein we now live, since there is the same occasion, as to general, if not parti-

cular considerations, now given to ministers of handling, which St John had then of writing this epistle.

To clear this, you may be pleased to know, that there were two sorts of men in St John's days, to wit, anti-christian heretics and carnal gospellers: those expressly denied the fundamentals of Christian religion; these, whilst they had divine phrases, seraphical expressions flowing from their lips, were sensual and diabolical in their lives, talking of communion with God, dwelling in God, knowing the truth, and what not, and yet practising envy, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness in their actions. Against both these this Boanerges (for so he with his brother James are called by Christ), Mark iii. 17, thundereth, and accordingly, as appeareth by the several chapters, his scope is double in this epistle.

1. To warn the orthodox that they were not withdrawn from their Christian profession by the wiles of heretics. This our apostle himself expresseth to be one special end of his writing, 1 John ii. 26, where he saith, 'These things have I written unto you concerning them which seduce you.' Indeed, wherein can the shepherd more express the care of his flock, than in keeping off the wolves? a minister of his charge, thau in arming them against heretics? And is there not as great need in this age as ever of such a caution,\* wherein such a multitude of deceivers swarm, to the endangering of ignorant and unstable Christians?

2. To persuade in general a practice agreeable to Christian profession, in reference to which he saith, 'These things I write to you, that you sin not,' chap. ii. 1; and in special the practice of that most truly Christian grace, love, which therefore he calleth the message from the beginning, chap. iii. 11. It is observed of precious stones, that each of them hath a several and peculiar excellency; the like is taken notice of in

\* Nemo non et lectu dignam et scitu necessariam hanc epistolam judicare possit; maximè hæc temporibus, quæ hæreses et schismata cum magno ecclesiæ detrimento invexerunt.—*Fer. proæm. in Epist. Joh.*

sacred books; and the splendour of this is, that it is much conversant in describing and prescribing the grace of charity.\* For this reason, St Gregory adviseth those who would be inflamed with this heavenly fire to read St John,† whose words are altogether, as it were, coloured with love. And St Augustine, taking notice of this, affirmeth that charity is the chief thing commended by St John in this epistle.‡ And can any admonition be more seasonable to this licentious and malicious generation? That prediction of our Saviour, 'The love of many shall wax cold,' Mat. xxiv. 1, 2, was never more verified than in these days. The best of us need this advice, as *oleum in flamma*, oil to nourish and increase the flame, and the most as *flamma ad fomitem*, a coal fetched from the altar to kindle or recover this fire in us. Indeed, canting language, affected forms of religious speech, were never more in use, but the reality of a Christian and charitable conversation was never less in fashion. And if, as without doubt, that of Solomon be true, 'A word spoken in due season, how good it is,' Prov. xv. 23, the discussing of this epistle, which was written for these ends so nearly concerning us, cannot but be profitable for, and so acceptable to us. But,

Lastly, the chief argument which incited me to this undertaking, is the comprehensive excellency and utility of the matter contained in this epistle. St Jerome,§ speaking of all the catholic epistles, calls them *breves pariter et longas, breves verbis, longas sententiis*: short, and yet long, short in phrase, but long in sense. This is singularly true of this epistle, which as in situation it is the middle,|| so for matter the fullest of them all, at once enriched with weight of matter and elegance of words, in which respect Lorinus¶ is bold to say, no other epistle is more divine, than this of him who is by the church called the divine.

The truth is, a world of heavenly matter is contained in this little map, which that it may the better appear, give me leave in few words to delineate it before you.

The globe of divinity parts itself into two hemispheres, to wit, *credenda et agenda*, the things we are to know and believe, and the things we are to do and perform, both which are here described; and therefore those two words, *μαρτυροῦμεν* and *ἀπαγγέλλομεν*, at the second verse of the first chapter, are by

\* Sanctus Judas totus est in fide orthodoxâ, Jacobus in oratione et patientia, Petrus in sanctitate, et Johannes in charitate fidelibus commendandâ.—*Lap. proœm in Ep. Cathol.*

† Succedit cor nostrum in igne charitatis quaerimus? Johannis verba pensemus ejus omne quod loquitur charitatis igne vaporatur.—*Greg. Hom. xiii. in Ezek.*

‡ In ipsâ epistolâ satis dulci et satis memorabili maximè charitate commendatur.—*Aug. Expos. in hanc Epist.*

§ Hieron. Epistol. ad Paulin.

|| Mediam tenet in septem quasi honoratiorem catholicis locum.—*Lor. in loc.*

¶ Ausim ipse dicere nullam hac epistolâ magis theologiam.—*Id. ibid.*

Justinian considered as referring to those two heads, the 'bearing witness' to matters of faith, and the 'shewing' or 'declaring' to matters of practice.\*

Out of this epistle we may gather an abstract of the things to be known, and that concerning God, ourselves, and Christ.

1. Concerning God. We may hence be instructed in his nature, attributes, and person: as to his nature, that 'he is light, and in him no darkness;' his attributes, that he is faithful, just, holy, righteous, pure, invisible, knowing all things, and love itself; the persons, that 'there are three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.'

2. Concerning ourselves. We may here learn what we are by nature, namely, 'lying in wickedness;' what we are by grace, to wit, 'born of God;' and what we shall be in glory, 'like to him, seeing him as he is.'

3. Concerning Christ. We have him here characterised in his natures, offices, acts, and benefits.

(1.) In respect of his natures, he is as to his deity called 'true God,' and yet more distinctly, with reference to his personality, the 'only begotten Son of God;' as to his humanity, he is said to be 'sent into the world,' and so truly man, that he was 'seen, heard, and handled' by the apostles.

(2.) As to his offices, he is here asserted in general to be the Christ, and so anointed to those offices; and in particular, as priest, to 'take away sin,' to be 'the propitiation for our sins,' and 'our advocate with the Father;' as prophet, by his Spirit to 'teach us all things;' and as a king, to 'destroy the works of the devil.'

(3.) Most of his mediatorial acts are here specified: his incarnation, where he is said to 'come in the flesh;' passion, in that he 'layeth down his life for us;' his resurrection, inasmuch as 'eternal life' is said to be 'in him;' and his ascension and intercession, because he is affirmed to be an 'advocate with the Father,' and his coming again in the day of judgment to appear as Judge of the world.

(4.) Lastly, We need not go further than this epistle to meet with those benefits we obtain by him, in that he 'giveth his Spirit to us,' whereby, 'we dwelling in him, and he in us, have fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ,' and by virtue of this 'forgiveness of our sins for his name's sake;' 'adoption,' whereby we are called the 'sons of God;' finally, justification by blood, sanctification by water, and eternal life.

2. Nor are only doctrines of faith, but rules of practice, deducible from this epistle.

(1.) Would we know what to avoid? This book teacheth us in general to eschew all sin, both describ-

\* Videtur apostolus duobus hisce verbis duo præcipua Christianæ religionis capita indicare voluisse, &c.—*Just. in loc. Joh. Epist. 1.*



ing what it is, a transgression of the law, and dehorting us from the commission of it; in particular, to expel the love of the world, to abandon hatred, malice, and envy, to keep ourselves from idols, and especially to beware of the sin unto death.

(2.) Would we be instructed what we are to put in practice in this epistle? We are called upon to 'believe in the name of Jesus Christ,' to 'love God who hath begotten us, and to love those who are begotten of him;' to have the 'hope of glory' fixed in us, to declare our repentance, by 'confessing our sins, and purifying ourselves;' to 'overcome the wicked one and the world;' to conquer the 'lusts of the flesh;' to 'walk as Christ walked,' by imitation of him, and to 'abide in him' by perseverance; to 'hear the word' preached by the ministers of Christ; to 'ask the things we want according to his will;' to 'open bowels of compassion,' and distribute our worldly goods to our needy brethren; finally, to 'do righteousness, keep God's commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.'

In few words, there are many golden *theses* in theology, which I find scattered up and down in this epistle, and being put together, must needs much enoble it in our estimation.

The three *persons in the sacred Deity*, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, their trinity in unity, and unity in trinity.

The threefold *state of man*, to wit, deformed, reformed, and transformed; corrupt, regenerate, and glorified.

The threefold *coming of Christ*, in the flesh, by his Spirit, and at the day of judgment.

Those three *grand enemies* of man's salvation, the flesh, world, and the devil.

The three *theological graces*, faith, hope, and charity.

The three principal *duties of religion*, prayer, hearing, and alms, are plainly set before us in this parcel of holy writ.

Nay, yet once more, those three things which every Christian man ought to be acquainted with for his soul's health, to wit, the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, are here at least summarily comprised.

Our blessed Saviour telleth us the whole *law* is reducible to these two great commandments, the love of God and our neighbour, both which are here amply taught us.

The *Lord's prayer* is intimated, in that we must 'ask according to God's will,' which cannot be unless according to that pattern; yea, in that we are called 'sons of God,' it teacheth us to cry OUR FATHER, and that chief petition in it, 'Forgive us our sins,' is once and again inculcated.

Finally, if you please, we may out of this epistle compile a *creed* not much unlike that of the apostles, no less justly than commonly heretofore received amongst us, though now almost forgotten by us, in

these or the like words: I believe in God the Father, invisible, just, holy, pure, and faithful, who knoweth all things, and is no less almighty to do all things, who is love itself, whereby he vouchsafed to make the heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, who came in the flesh (to wit, by being conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary), and laid down his life for us (being crucified, dead, and buried), and having life in himself (rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, where he sitteth at God's right hand), is our advocate with the Father, and at that day of judgment shall come and appear again (to wit, to judge the quick and dead). I believe in the Holy Ghost, the fellowship or communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

By this time you cannot but see, beloved, what a body of divinity, what a treasury of spiritual knowledge, this epistle is. Well might Ferus say,\* *Ipsam evangelicam doctrinam summam brevissimam complectitur*, the sum of evangelical doctrine is succinctly and yet distinctly comprehended in it; and now methinketh every one is ready to say with that father,† *Adoro plenitudinem sacre Scripture*, I adore and admire the fulness of holy Scripture, wherein every drop is as it were a rivulet, every rivulet a great river, and river an ocean; every branch a tree, every tree an orchard, an orchard a field; I mean every verse as it were a chapter, every chapter an epistle, every epistle a volume, for the abundance of precious truths contained in them; and yet more particularly by these considerations sufficient reason cannot but appear, as for my discussion, so your attention; and thus this discourse serveth to make way for the following.

But before I begin, I have one request to make to you, and that from my very soul, that as I hope you have not, are not, so you will not be wanting in your requests to God for me; and what you should ask for me, I shall not go out of this epistle to tell you, even that 'unction from the Holy One, whereby we may know all things;' that 'anointing which teacheth us all things, and is truth and no lie,' chap. ii. 20, 26. Let this be the matter of your prayer, both for me and for yourselves, that it may teach me how to expound and apply, you how to hear and receive, both you and me how to understand and obey the sacred saving truths which are delivered to us in this first general epistle of St John.

I shall not at this time enter upon the epistle itself, only in a few words take notice of the title which is prefixed, wherein we have two things considerable; namely,

The *penman*, John; and the *writing*; which is set down, for the nature of it, to be an *epistle*; for the order, the *first*; and for the extent of it, a *general epistle*.

I. First, The epistle is asserted to be St John's.

\* Fer. præm. † Tertul. adver. Hermog. cap. xxii.

Indeed, we do not find him setting down his name in any part of the epistle. The other apostles are express in this particular. James, and Peter, and Jude, and Paul, in all epistles, except that to the Hebrews; but St John in this epistle is altogether silent, in the other two he only giveth himself the common title of an elder. When he hath any occasion to mention himself in his Gospel, and that in things much tending to his dignity, it is done in a third person by way of circumlocution; only in his Apocalypse he specieth his name, Rev. i. 4, but that without any addition of honour or dignity.

It lets us see in general the humility of this holy apostle, who thought so meanly of himself, that he accounts himself not worth the naming. Indeed, on the one hand (though it is often too true of many, who arrogantly affect to blazon their own names and titles), we are not to imagine that when the other apostles prefix their names, and most of them their high calling, that it is done out of vain glory; but, on the other hand, we may justly conclude it a testimony of great humility in this apostle, that he suppresseth his name, his office, by silence. Thus, whilst he was high in Christ's, he became lowly in his own eyes; whilst he was rich in grace (his very name carrying as it were grace,\* as Benjamin's sack did money in its mouth), he was poor in spirit, scarce thinking himself worthy of a name. Oh let us learn by his pattern not to affect our own praises, nor speak high things of ourselves, ever remembering that as, *artis est celare artem*, it is an art to conceal our art, so to neglect our own names and honour is the best way to true honour and a good name.

Besides this notion of humility, it may further be conceived, and not improbably, that this concealment of his name was an act of prudence, especially considering the time when it is most rationally conjectured to be written, to wit (as the learned English annotator† hath observed to my hand), not long before the destruction of Jerusalem, whenas the church was under a sharp persecution (occasioned no doubt by those many antichrists then arising), in which St John was peculiarly involved, yea, of which he warneth those to whom he writeth, and therefore wisely forbearth to publish his name, which might have been prejudicial to him. There is no doubt a policy consistent with piety, which as all Christians, so ministers may use in persecuting times. It was that our Saviour at least allowed his disciples to be wise as serpents, with this caution, that they were innocent as doves, Mat. x. 16; and sure it is no injury to truth and innocency, if a man, a minister, in prudence withhold the publication of his name to prevent his enemies' malice.

But whether these or any other were the reasons of St John's silencing his name, yet it is without contro-

versy that he was the penman;\* and indeed, as Dionysius Alexandrinus hath not unfitly observed, the Gospel and the Epistle are so concordant, often using the same phrases, that he who penned the one must be acknowledged as the writer of the other.

But I shall not need to prove what all Christians grant, only it will not be amiss in a few words to give you a character concerning this sacred amanuensis.

Though in one Greek copy I find only τοῦ ἀγίου Ἰωαννου, 'The Epistle of St John,' yet the most read the title Ἰωαννου τοῦ ἀποστόλου, 'The Epistle of John the Apostle,' whereby it appeareth, that the penman of the epistle was not an ordinary saint, and so a member of, but an officer, yea, dignified with the highest office in, the Christian church; for so we find St Paul, in his enumeration, beginning with apostles as the most divine order, Eph. iv. 11. And yet more than so, this apostle John was not only one of the twelve, but one of the three whom Christ honoured so far as to be witnesses of his miracle in raising the ruler's daughter, Luke viii. 57, spectators of his glorious transfiguration on the mount, Mat. xvii. 12, and his associates in the garden when he laboured under that sore agony, Mat. xvi. 37, and whom St Paul mentioneth as pillars of the church, Gal. ii. 9, yea, one of the two whom Christ sent to prepare the passover for him and his disciples to eat, Luke xxii. 8; and yet to go one step higher, there were some prerogatives with which this apostle was invested above any of the rest. To him it was, above all the other, Christ at his death upon the cross commended the care of his mother, John xix. 26; him it was whom Christ admitted so near as to lean on his bosom, being therefore called the disciple whom Jesus loved, John xiii. 23, 24, and to whom even Peter beckoned that he should ask Christ concerning him that should betray him, *quod majus dare potuit majoris dilectionis indicium*?‡ Christ could not give a higher testimony of his affection towards him, than by taking him into his bosom. No wonder if, lying at such breasts, he did thence suck spiritual wisdom, and drink the nectar of divine mysteries,‡ whercof he became at once an evangelist in his Gospel, a prophet in his Revelation, an apostle in his Epistles.§

And surely the consideration of the person should make us so much the more in love with the epistle, methinketh, as God saith to us concerning Christ, who was in his bosom, Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my well-beloved Son, hear him,' that Christ saith to us concerning St John, who lay in his bosom, 'This is my well-beloved apostle, hear him;' though yet let me add one caution, with which I shall close up this branch, that we rest

\* Aug. de doctr. Christ. lib. ii. cap. 8, Euseb. Eccles. hist. lib. vii. cap. 20. † Aug. in Joh. tr. 61.

‡ Joannes cum caput suum supra pectus Jesu domini reclinaret, hauriebat profunda secreta sapientie.—Ambros. in Ps. cxviii. octon. 2.

§ Joannes et apostolus et evangelista et propheta, &c.—Hier. contr. Jovin., lib. i.

\* Ἰωαννης, idem quod יוהן נון nomen compositum ex יהוה et ין gratia.—Puss Lex. † Dr Hammond.



not in the writer, but look up to the inditer, remembering that St John, and all 'holy men of God, both spake and wrote as moved by the Holy Ghost,' 2 Peter i. 21. They were only the amanuenses, but the Spirit is the author; they were the instrumental, but the Spirit is the principal efficient; and therefore, though we ought to honour them, yet we must look beyond, above them, receiving what was written by them as inspired by God, and accordingly to yield audience, credence, and obedience to it. And so much for the peuman.

Pass we on to the writing itself, and therein consider we,

1. The nature of it, expressed in that denomination of an epistle. Indeed, in a large sense the whole Bible is called by St Gregory,\* *Epistola omnipotentis Dei ad creaturam suam, in qua verba Dei sonant, et cor Dei dicitur*, God's epistle to his creature, wherein his mind is revealed; but in a strict sense it is only used of, and applied to, this and other holy writings of the like nature: for an epistle, properly so called, is a familiar colloquy between absent friends, whereby they impart counsel and comfort to, and so after a sort become present each with other. To this purpose the father excellently, where he saith,† The use of epistles is to unite them that are separated, to make present those that are absent, by which we communicate our thoughts and minds to our distant friends. Thus it was with the apostles; they could not be always present with those churches they had planted, and therefore ἀποστολῆς vice fungebatur ἐπιστολῆς, they endeavoured to advise, and strengthen, and build them up by epistles.

It lets us see the care of godly ministers over their people, not only whilst present by speaking, but when absent by writing to them, *egebant vexati hæresibus et persecutionibus Epistolarum consolatione.*‡ St John well knew what need the Christians (being as 'sheep in the midst of wolves') had of direction and consolation, and therefore he sendeth this comfortable epistle to them, desiring that though his tongue could not, yet his pen might reach them.

And yet further we may here take notice of God's mercy, as well as the apostle's care, who is pleased so familiarly to converse with his church by way of epistle. He dealt with the Jewish church as with servants, by way of mandate; but with the Christian as with friends, by way of epistle.§ Far be it from us that his familiarity should beget contempt, but rather the lower he is pleased to condescend in this way of mak-

\* Greg. lib. iv. ep. 40.

† Epistolarum ejusmodi usus est ut disjuncti locorum intervallis affectu adhæreamus in quibus inter absentes imago refulget præsentia, &c.—Ambros. lib. viii. ep. 65.

‡ Lorin in epist.

§ Pulchra est piorum veterum observatio, quod in novo demum Testamento, in quo deus familiariter per filium suum nobis locutus est, mysteria regni cælestis per epistolas conscribi cœperint; cum epistola nihil aliud sit quam familiare cum amico colloquium.—Gerard in epist. petr. 2.

ing known his will to us, let us so much the more highly advance his goodness, and readily follow his dictates. God seemeth to set it down as an aggravation of Israel's disobedience, that he 'used similitudes by the ministry of his prophets,' Hosea xii. 10; it will be no less of ours, that God hath used epistles by the ministry of his apostles in a most friendly way, advising us for our good, and yet these love-tokens are slighted and contemned by us.

II. The order of this epistle is next to be briefly taken notice of. It is the *first*, and it is so in a double consideration, the one of *time*, the other of *dignity*; it is the first, not the only epistle he wrote. *First* implieth at least a second; and here we find not only a second, but a third. This holy apostle was not idle or negligent, but in several kinds, and in the same kind once and again, reneweth his pains. Nor yet is there only a priority in respect of *order*, but of *honour*; the first, because the largest, the fullest, the sublimest of all the epistles for the extent of it, not only equalizing, but exceeding the other two, and that not severally, but jointly, for the matter of it more divine and heavenly than either of the rest. All portions of holy writ are alike excellent as to the author from whom they are sent, and end for which they are written; but yet some of them may be more full and useful than others. Such is this if compared with St John's other epistles, and therefore called first.

III. The last thing to be discussed in the title is the *extent* of the epistle, signified in that term  *catholic*. It is the appellation which is given to the seven epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude, an epithet affixed to them (as Pareus\* thinketh) rather through inconsiderateness than any just ground; but I think him too rash in that censure. Others have sought the reason of it in the number, which, being septenary, is a number of perfection, intimating the universal perfection of the doctrine contained in them, in which respect these epistles have been resembled to wisdom's seven pillars, by which her house is supported, Prov. ix. 1; the Lamb's seven horns, by which heretics are pushed at; the seven golden candlesticks, by which the light of evangelical doctrine is set up, Rev. i. 13; v. 6, and the seven loaves by which multitudes are nourished, Mat. xv. 34; but this I conceive to be a fancy rather than a verity. There are two reasons given of this appellation, which carry in them most probability, especially the latter.

1. This epistle may be called general according to Œcumenius his notion, because it is not directed to one particular person, as those to Timothy and Titus, nor yet to particular churches, as those to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, † &c., but to the converted Jews in several parts; and in this sense *denominatio à majore parte petita*, the denomination is not from every epistle

\* Par. in Jac.

† οὐ γὰρ ἀφορισμενως ἴδεντο ἢ τὴν πόλιν, &c.—Œcumen. in Epist. Cathol. Serrar prolog. in Ep. Cath. Aug. in Ep.

(since two, at least one, of St John's epistles is manifestly directed to a particular person), but the greater part. As for this first epistle, St Austin indeed seemeth to assert it as directed to the *Parthians*; but if with Junius we understand that as an Hebrew word, it signifieth as much as the *scattered*, banished;\* or if we take it in the vulgar notion, we must know that Parthia was then a potent kingdom, containing under it many oriental nations, through which, as Josephus† testifieth, abundance of the Jews were scattered, to whom it is not improbable this epistle might be directed, and so this reason of catholic fitly applied to it.

2. But that which (at least to me) seemeth most rational is, that this title was given them upon their general reception in the church, in which respect they were called canonical as well as catholic.‡

To clear this you must know, that at the first, besides those epistles which carry St Paul's name in the front of them, only the first epistle of Peter, and this of John, were universally received. Indeed, concerning this epistle of St John, St Austin saith,‡ *Per omnes gentes recitatur, orbis terra autoritate retinetur*. It was received by the whole Christian world from the beginning; and to distinguish these from the rest, they were then called catholic; and afterwards the other five being received into the canon, had this name affixed to them for the distinguishing of them from those epistles of Barnabas, Ignatius, and Polycarpus, which, though ancient, were not taken into the rule of our faith. Nor was this any diminution to the authority of St Paul's epistles, but only an intimation that these were now added to those;§ and whereas the other epistles, being written by one man, might

\* Jun. in Bellarm. lib. ii. de. verb. Dei. cap. 15.

† Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 12. 164.

‡ Aug. in Ep.

§ Non ut aliis quippiam adimat sed has illis adjungerent.—*Jun. in Jud. Epist.*

very well receive a single denomination from him, and be called St Paul's epistles, these, being penned by several, could not be mentioned jointly without some such fit and venerable title annexed to them.\*

The useful meditations we may hence take up are, that since this epistle is written generally to the Christians in several places, we are to remember it is as well catholic in respect of several ages. Indeed, there is no age of man but is herein instructed; so he saith himself, that he writes to children, young men, fathers; nor is there any age of man since it was written to whom it doth not extend, and therefore no less concerneth us than those who were then alive.† And surely as the epistle is general, so our application of it must be particular, every one bringing the lessons of it home to our own hearts. And yet once again, since it was so generally at first received, therefore we to be the more confirmed in the verity of it, and so induced the more strongly to believe the assertions, and carefully to obey the directions contained in it.

And thus, with what brevity I could, I have unfolded the title page. Time will not now give me leave to enter upon the book itself. But I hope what hath been already said will prove a good preparative to my ensuing discourses, both to give some light for the knowledge of, and cause some heat of love towards this parcel of, holy writ. And my desire to you (with which I shall conclude), is, that though I cannot begin to handle, you would begin to read it; and as in itself it is a familiar kind of writing, so by frequent perusing make it familiar to you; and as the penman of it lay in Christ's bosom, so it may lie in your bosom, to be both your comforter and counsellor till you come to rest in Abraham's bosom to all eternity. Amen.

\* Hoc nomen his impositum est epistolis quod a diversis autoribus sint conscripta, et commune eis nomen tribuendum.—*Carthus. proam in Epist. Call.*

† Ideo videtur dici *καθολικὴ* quod non certis personis deditur, sed ad omnem aetatem et sexum pertinet.—*Art. in loc.*

## SERMON II.

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.—1 JOHN I. 1-4.*

THESE words are as an head to the body, a gate to the field, a porch to the building of this epistle; an introduction which very much speaketh the writer to be St John, because it is as it were *antistrophe evangelii*, a resounding to the proem of his Gospel.\* The Gospel begins with, 'In the beginning was the word,' and this with 'That which was from the begin-

\* Lapid. in loc.

ning concerning the Word of life;' there a little after, 'The Word was made flesh, and we saw his glory,' here 'The life was manifested, and we have seen it.' *Vide si non attestatur epistola sua evangelio suo*, saith the father justly. See how the one as it were echoeth and answereth to the other, so that at the very threshold we may read the builder of this excellent fabric.

And as this exordium speaketh the writer, so it



manifesteth him an orator, since it fitly agreeth to those rules which oratory giveth to be observed in preambles. There are three properties in every good exordium: convenient length, lest, if excessive, the oration be like the little city of Mindas, with a great gate; suitable aptness, fetched from the very bowels of the matter in hand;\* and a profitable efficacy, to render the auditory attentive, docible, and benevolous. All of these meet in this preface. The length, you see, consists but of four verses, whereas the epistle spreadeth itself into five chapters. In respect of its fitness, it is taken from the matter itself, about which he intended to write, not staying the reader in any needless circumlocutions, yea (which is almost peculiar to this apostle), not so much as in a salutation of those to whom he writeth. Finally, it is so fully and exactly composed, that it cannot but attain with rational men the ends of a preface, since the importance of what he was to speak of being no less than that of life, and that life eternal, it could not but gain attention. The perspicuity of it, by reason of the manifestation of 'his life, could not but render them docible; and the end of the apostle being their joy, and profit, and comfort, might well command benevolence to him, who declareth so much good will towards them.† And I hope this proem being so ample, I shall need no other preface to obtain the like from you,‡ then the rehearsing and unfolding this, 'That which was,' &c.

The manner of composing these verses, by reason of that figure which rhetoricians call *hyperbaton*, the transposition of words, and likewise the interposition of a parenthesis, is somewhat dark and obscure. And the Greek scholiast undertaketh to give several reasons of it, such as are to let us know that our salvation consisteth not in words, but things; to prevent the casting of pearls before swine, to avoid heathenish loquacity, to express much in a little, and to exercise our diligence in finding out the sense and meaning of it.§ And how involved a labyrinth soever this period may seem, I doubt not but, by the clue of the Spirit, we shall extricate ourselves out of it. The Syriac version hath contributed some light to this dark sentence, by placing the principal verb in the front, 'We publish to you that which was from the beginning,' &c.; but the sense of these verses will, I conceive, appear the plainliest by digesting them into those several propositions, by which, as so many steps, we shall orderly ascend to their genuine meaning.

1. The Word of eternal life, which was with the Father, was manifested to us.

\* Exordia ex ipsis causæ vicribus sumenda.—*Cic. de orat.* 1. 2.

† Munus exordii est comparare benevolentiam, si causa sit invidiosa et dubia; attentionem, si causa videatur levis, et parvi momenti; docilitatem, si difficultas aut prolixitas offendat.—*Alsted. Orat. in Encyclop.*

‡ Exordium sine exordio, nullis prorsus ambagibus audientem suspendens.—*Fer. in loc.*

§ Justin. *Cicum. in loc.*

2. This Word of life being manifested, we have heard and seen with our eyes, and looked upon, and our hands have handled.

3. That which we have thus seen, heard, and handled concerning this Word of life, was from the beginning.

4. That which was from the beginning, and which we have heard, seen, and handled, concerning the Word of life, we bear witness, shew, declare, and write to you.

5. The end of our declaring and writing these things to you is, that your joy may be full, by having fellowship with us.

6. That fellowship which we have, and we would you should have, together with us, is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

That I may proceed both more distinctly and succinctly in discussing these words, be pleased to observe in them these two generals; to wit, *apostolicum prædicationis studium, et sublime evangelii præconium*; here is,

The apostles' care of their duty in publishing the gospel, and this according to the English translation in four, but according to the Greek original in three, expressions, one of them being twice repeated, we bear witness, we shew, we declare, and unto you.

The gospel's excellency which they did publish, and this delineated in four character, namely,

1. The *dignity of its object*; and that no other than the 'Word of life,' even that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to them.

2. The *certainly of its tradition*, inasmuch as it was that which they had 'heard, seen with their eyes, looked upon, and their hands handled.'

3. The *antiquity of its origination*, as being 'that which was from the beginning.'

4. The *utility of the end*, which is the people's communion with the apostles, yea, with God and Christ, in those words, that 'you may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ;' and by this means the completion of their comfort in those words, 'that your joy may be full.'

These are the several branches of this tree of life, through each of which, by divine enablement, I shall pass, according to the proposed method, gathering and distributing those sweet and wholesome fruits which grow upon them.

I. The apostle's care of publishing the gospel is the first considerable, and it is that which St John doth here assert in the behalf not only of himself, but his fellow-apostles, for it is not the singular *I*, but the plural number *we*.\* Nor is this a term of state, as sometimes princes write in a magnificent style, but intended to comprehend the other apostles, together with himself, that they might be accounted as faithful

\* Pluralis nominativus primæ personæ non semper magnitudinis, sed sæpe modestiæ habet significationem, ubi nostra decora cum aliis partimur.—*Grot. in loc.*

as he in this sacred work. The expressions by which our apostle sets forth the exercise of their care, are very significant, and such indeed as do superadd somewhat at least by way of explication to the other. Take them briefly in their order as they lie in the verses.

1. The first we meet with is *μαρτυροῦμεν*, 'bear witness.' This was indeed the chief office to which the apostles were designed by Christ, to bear witness of him; and that they might be enabled to the faithful discharge of it, he promised he would, and accordingly did after his ascension, cause them to receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon them, John xv. 26, 27, Acts i. 8.

Not (beloved) that Christ stood in need of any human testimony; he saith himself, 'I receive no witness from man,' John v. 34, to wit, as wanting it or not having greater; his own miraculous works which were done by him did testify of him, ver. 36, 37; the devils of hell, the angels in heaven, those out of envy, these in duty, gave witness to him. Nay, his Father, by a wonderful voice from heaven, attested him to be his well beloved Son. It was not, then, in regard of himself that he ordained the apostles to be his witnesses, but in regard of them, and the people; of them, that he might put this high honour upon them, of being, as it were, Christ's jury. Look as God's making use of instruments in his providential works is not *ex defectu potestatis*, but *abundantia bonitatis*, want of power, but abundance of love whereby he would advance his creatures to that great dignity of being his servants, so Christ's appointing his apostles to be witnesses was not because he stood in need of testimony from them, but that he might confer the honour upon them of giving testimony to him. And as of them, so of the people, who, having men like themselves to bear testimony to Christ, might with the [more] confidence and cheerfulness receive it. In this respect, what Christ said concerning those words he uttered at the raising of Lazarus,—John xi. 42, 'Because of the people that stand by I said it;' and concerning that voice from heaven, chap. xii. 30, 'It came not for me but for your sakes,'—the same may be asserted concerning the apostolical testimony. It was not as if Christ needed it, but because we need it for our confirmation and consolation. I end this with a double *item*.

To the ministers of the gospel, that we remember this is our duty, as well as it was the apostles', to bear witness to Christ. To be an eye-witness of Christ risen was indeed peculiar to the apostles, and therefore, that St Paul might be an apostle, Christ was pleased to manifest himself visibly to him; but to bear witness to Christ is that which all ministers are obliged to, and therefore to labour that we approve ourselves true and faithful witnesses, asserting only and wholly the truth of the gospel. 'It is required in a steward,' saith the apostle, 'that he be found faithful,' no less in a witness. Ministers are both God's stewards and Christ's

witnesses; oh, let them discharge their duty with fidelity.

To the people, that they receive with faith what the apostles and ministers of Christ attest with truth; that as there is *fidelitas in teste*, so there may be *fides in auditore*. These faithful witnesses may find believing ears. What great reason there is of believing these witnesses will afterwards appear; let it suffice us to know for the present, that he who hath appointed them to bear witness, expecteth we should embrace it. And so much the rather ought this duty to be performed by the people, because, as we do *testari*, so likewise *obtestari*, *protestari* (for that sometimes is the notion of this word, and is so construed here by Cassian\*) we so bear witness to the truth as that we protest against all those who receive not our testimony. We testify not only for the strengthening of faith in the weak, but for the affrighting of them who are obstinate in their infidelity,† since as we now bear witness to you, so we shall one day bear witness against such; and that testimony which cannot now prevail for your conversion, shall at last come in as an evidence to your condemnation. And so much for the first term.

2. The next expression, *ἀπαγγέλλομεν*, is twice repeated, vers. 2, 3, but Englished by two several words, 'we shew' and 'we declare,' it is that which intimateth what kind of bearing witness the apostle here intended.

There are, indeed, several ways of bearing witness to Christ, to wit, by suffering, especially death itself (for to such the name of *μάρτυρες* is κατ' ἐξοχήν applied), for Christ's cause, and the gospel; by leading lives answerable to the Christian profession, and by openly publishing the truth of Christ; and all of these ways the apostles did bear witness to Christ, the most of them suffering death actually, except this apostle, who yet was banished, and no doubt was ready to have died (had he been called to it) for the name of Jesus. Nor were any of them wanting, by the holiness and uprightness of their conversations, to attest and credit their doctrines; but that way of bearing witness which here is meant appeareth by the shewing of this phrase to be the promulging of the evangelical truths concerning the Messiah, to which those other ways are necessary appendixes, that as we preach we should live, and be ready to justify the truth of what we preach, with the loss even of our lives, if the providence of God and malice of men put us upon it.

That, then, which we have here to take notice of, is the readiness of these apostles to shew and declare the mysteries of salvation to the people; in-

\* Hoc se protestari dicit, simul scilicet et exsequens officium fidei et incipiens terrorem incredulitati, &c.—Cass. de Incarn. lib. v. cap. vi.

† Sacerdotis prædicatio salvandis est correctio, contestatio judicandis, &c.—Ambros. Serm. 83.



deed this was the chief part of their work, being therefore compared to lights and ambassadors. The nature of light is to discover, the business of an ambassador is to impart his message; and accordingly the work of an apostle is to reveal the gospel. Indeed, for this very end the life was manifested to them, that they might manifest it to others; Christ made known himself to them, that they might make it known to others; and it is that which is God's aim, in whatsoever knowledge he bestoweth upon any of us. He hath given light to the sun, that it should be communicated to the world; water to the ocean, that it should feed the rivers; and talents to ministers, Christians, not that they should hide them in a napkin, but employ them for the enriching of their brethren; and therefore if we hear a *Veni et vide*, 'Come and see,' we must expect to hear another voice, *Abi et narra*, 'Go and tell,' and declare it. The truth is, this is the temper of a religious heart. Jeremiah saith of himself, chap. xx. 9, 'I was weary with forbearing;' and David, Ps. xl. 10, 'I have not hid thy righteousness, nor concealed thy truth from the great congregation;' and the apostles, Acts iv. 20, 'we cannot but speak.' Spiritual knowledge in the Christian soul is like new wine in the vessel, which must have a vent; or the ointment in the right hand, which cannot but bewray itself, Prov. xxvii. 16. The zeal that is in a faithful minister, nay, in every godly man, for the advancing of God's glory, edifying others, propagating religion, burneth so strongly, that it cannot but flame forth in shewing what he knoweth to others. Oh, let every one of us, to whom any divine illumination is imparted, fulfil God's design, and testify the truth of grace in our hearts, by endeavouring to teach and instruct our brethren.

But this is not all we are to consider in this expression. The Greek word is a compound of ἀγγέλλω which signifieth to *bring a message*, and ἀπό, which is as much as *from another*; so Beza glosseth upon the word here.\* We declare, as being sent by God to publish this errand; and that which hereby is intimated to us is, that these holy apostles did not run before they were sent, but had a mission and commission to shew and declare the things of the gospel. Indeed, St Paul puts the question, and by it no doubt intendeth a negation, 'How shall they preach except they be sent?' Rom. x. 15; and the author to the Hebrews is express, 'No man taketh this honour upon him, except he be called of God, as was Aaron,' Heb. v. 4. These apostles were in an immediate and extraordinary way sent by Christ himself; the successors of the apostles were separated and sent by them, and all the true ministers of Christ have been, are, and shall be sent by their successors until the end of the world, to declare this message. I would to God this were more seriously pondered on in this licentious age, wherein so many presumptuously undertake to preach the gospel without a call. Gregory Nazianzen, speak-

\* *Eccl. in loc.*

ing in his own defence, saith he came to this work, ἑὸς αὐτοῦ ἀγγέλωτος, ἀλλὰ κληθεῖς, not of himself, but being called;† but a great number in our days send themselves into the vineyard, as if our Saviour had said, not the kingdom of heaven, but the preaching of the the kingdom, suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force; having no right at all to it. These men tread in the steps, and it is God's wonderful patience they come not to the dismal end, of Korah and his complices. It is true, beloved, all Christians, as I have already hinted, ought, as they are able, to declare the things of God to others, teaching and exhorting one another; but it is as true that this they are to do within the compass of their place and calling, as masters, as parents, as governors in a private charitable way; but still this declaring here understood, which is in a public authoritative way, belongs only to them who are sent, either immediately or mediately from God. I end this, to shew and declare, that is our part, who are the ministers; to hear and attend, that is yours, who are the people; and surely as we are bound to do the one, you are no less obliged to perform the other. We, after St Paul's pattern, Acts xx. 27, must 'not shun to declare the whole counsel of God to you,' and you must not neglect to receive the counsel we declare; and so much the rather considering that as we do *annuntiare*, so we do *denuntiare*, declare the truth to you, so we denounce judgment against the stiff-necked and hard-hearted auditors; yea, as we do now *annuntiare*, so we must at the last day *renuntiare* (and all these things the word in the text signifieth), return an account to our Lord and Master what entertainment our message hath found with those to whom we are sent, and then as truly it will be woe to us, if we have not declared; so woe will be to you, if you have not regarded this message which we shew and declare unto you. And so much be spoken of the second particular.

3. There is yet one term more behind, ver. 4, and that is, γράφομεν, 'we write unto you;' and as declaring sheweth what kind of bearing witness the apostle chiefly relateth to, so this writing what kind of declaring he especially speaketh of; for whereas there are but two ways of declaring the gospel,† to wit, *sermo* and *scriptio*, word and writing, by the tongue and the pen, this latter is that which the apostle principally intendeth when he saith, We declare, we write; that is, we declare by writing.

And indeed there are several advantages in writing above speaking, which might very well induce the apostles to take this course. 'My tongue,' saith David, Ps. xlv. 1, 'is the pen of a ready writer.' The pen no less truly is as the tongue of a ready speaker.

1. By this it is we speak to many, very many, even those that are absent and far distant from us; in which

\* Greg. Naz. orat. xxv.

† Modi prædicandi evangelium omni creaturæ sunt duo, &c.—*Jun. animadv. in Bell. lib. iv. cap. iii.*

respect, writing is wittily styled an invention to deceive absence; and therefore St Paul made use of it for this very end, when he saith to the Corinthians, 'Being absent, I write unto you;' whereas by the voice we only speak to those who are present, and in a little compass of ground distant from us; so that, be they never so many, they are but a very few in comparison of those to whom we communicate our thoughts by the pen.

2. Again, by this it is we speak, not only whilst alive, but when we are dead, and so declare the truth, not only to them who are coetaneous with us, but shall in future ages succeed after us; in which regard that of the psalmist is very suitable, Ps. cii. 18, 'This shall be written for the generations to come.' Words pass away, and are buried in oblivion, whilst writing remaineth and becometh an image of eternity.

Upon these considerations it is more than probable that St John and others of the apostles did shew by writing, since the Christians of those times were scattered up and down by persecution, so that the apostles could not reach them all in person; nor had they regard only to the present age, but to the propagation of Christianity in succeeding, and therefore they made use of this way, to declare by writing.\*

That which we are from hence to take notice of is double.

1. In special, the industry of the apostle is to be meditated on by ministers for their imitation. These men of God neglect no means whereby they may bear witness to Christ and declare the gospel. Hence it was that wherever they came they did teach both publicly [and privately, and where they could not come they sent by writing for the edification of the church. St Jude saith of himself, ver. 3, that he gave diligence, nay, 'all diligence,' and that not only to speak, but 'write of the common salvation,' and by this means, whereas the slothful man is dead whilst he liveth, he (with the rest of the laborious penmen of Holy Writ) lives though dead. This practice should be ministers' pattern, who must make the salvation of the people their business, and do all the good they can, and that by all ways in promoting the knowledge of Christ. If we had as many tongues or hands as Argus had eyes, we should think them all little enough to employ in this sacred work of the gospel.

2. In general, the benignity of God is to be contemplated by us all for our gratulation, in that he was pleased to put his apostles upon writing the mysteries of salvation. Indeed, as the Greek father's † expression is, *ἐυδόκησε*, it was God's singular good pleasure which moved him to move these holy men to the penning of his word for our learning, that we may

have a sure guide, a clear light, an infallible rule to walk by. And therefore however some among the Romanists,\* yea (which is more doleful), even among ourselves, cast contempt upon Scripture, styling it *atramentariam theologiam*, an inky divinity, a dead letter, let us highly esteem it, stedfastly cleave to it, and acknowledge the mercy of God in affording it.

I am not ignorant how the Romanists, † that they may deny the written word to be an adequate rule of faith, and infer a necessity of their unwritten traditions, assert that the apostles did not write by virtue of any command from Christ, but only upon emergent occasions. But, beloved, as to some parcels of holy writ we read of an express precept, so often in the Apocalypse, no less than twelve several times. Besides (as the learned Chamier and Junius well observe against Bellarmine‡), the general command of teaching all nations and preaching the gospel to every creature virtually requireth the use of all means, among which writing is not the least, for the publication of it. And yet further, whenas we read in St Paul's epistle to Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 16, that *πᾶσα γράφη*, all and every parcel of Scripture, is *θεοπνευστος*, of divine inspiration, we may very well conclude that the penmen had an internal command putting them on, as well as an internal assistance enabling them to this holy work. In this respect it is that St Augustine saith expressly, whatsoever God would have us know concerning his word and his works, he gave in charge to those sacred amanuenses to write; § and therefore let none of us be wise above what is written, but humbly and meekly confine ourselves to that which his goodness and wisdom hath allotted for us, to walk by the writings of his prophets and apostles, beseeching him that as he hath caused his truths to be written that they may be read with our eyes, so he would write them in our hearts, and thereby we may have a comfortable evidence that our names are written in the book of life.

II. And thus I have given a despatch to the first general part, to wit, the apostles' care of their duty. Pass now on to the other general, which is the gospel's excellency, and therein to the

Eminency of its object, in the close of the first and part of the second verses, in those words, 'the Word of life,' the 'life that was manifested,' that 'eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us,' all which is spoken concerning Christ.

But before I enter on the handling of these words in this (which I conceive to be the most genuine) interpretation, there is another exposition, which being

\* Coster. Enehirid.

† Bellarm. de Verb. Dei., lib. iv. cap. 4.

‡ Duodecies Joanni mandatum ut scribat in libro Apocalypses.—*Jun. animadv. in Bel.*, i. lib. iv. cap. 13.

Sufficiebat generale mandatum ut docerent, prædicarent, etiam ut traderent; nam illa omnia fiunt duobus modis, vel vivâ voce vel scripto.—*Cham. de can.*, lib. ix. cap. 6.

§ Quicquid ille de suis dictis et factis nos legere voluit hæc scribendum illis tanquam suis manibus imperavit.

\* *Scripserunt apostoli, ut non solum hominibus qui tunc erant, sed omnibus qui futuri erant, ipsi non solum vivi sed etiam mortui evangelium annuntiant.*—*Maldonat præfat. in Evang.*

† Theoph. in Matth.



neither improbable nor unprofitable, I shall not pass by; and it will be all I can discuss at this time.

It is of those who understand these words concerning the gospel itself, as if that were here called the word of life wherein this eternal life is manifested; though even according to this construction the encomium is of the gospel with reference to its matter, whereabout it is conversant. This exposition is that which is alleged by Calvin,\* asserted by Grotius,† and assevered by Vorstius;‡ nor is it dissonant to the analogy of faith, and according to it. Here are two things to be considered, namely, the appellation given to the gospel, it is the word of life; and the reason of that appellation, because in it the life, eternal life, is manifested to us.

1. The appellation here affixed to the gospel is choice and comfortable, it is the word of life; a title which is made use of by St Paul, Philip. ii. 15, 16, when he required of the Philippians that they should 'shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life;' and by the angel, when he commands the apostles to 'speak in the ears of the people all the words of this life,' Acts v. 20. Suitably hereunto it is that it is called elsewhere the 'word of salvation,' chap. xiii. 26, and the 'gospel of salvation,' Eph. i. 13, and the 'grace of God that bringeth salvation,' Titus ii. 11, and the 'ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls,' James i. 21; and yet once more, 'that word of God's grace, which is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among them which are sanctified,' Acts xx. 32.

2. The reason of this appellation is fit and pregnant, because those words, 'eternal life is manifested to us,' are such a confirmation that they are withal an explanation of the title in both the branches of it. For,

(1.) Would we know what this life is, whereof the gospel is the word? The answer is, it is eternal life; in which respect St Peter saith to Christ, John vi. 68, 'Thou hast the words of eternal life.' In these two expressions is contained a short description of felicity. It is a life; for since life is the highest of all created excellencies, it is aptly used to set forth a state of happiness; § especially if we take *vivere* as comprehending in it *valere*, and so denoting an hale, vigorous and prosperous life. But that which crowneth life itself, and maketh it an happiness, is its eternity, since (as the schools well) true bliss must be able to give satisfaction to the appetite, which it cannot do if there be any fear of losing or expiring. The truth is, neither of these two can be severed in an happy condition: were it eternal, if it were not life, there could

be no bliss, since it is true of the damned that they shall exist eternally; and were it life, if it were not eternal, it could not be happy, since a transitory fading life is rather a death than a life. And therefore that the gospel may appear a means of happiness, it is said to reveal to us eternal life. And

(2.) Would we know in what respect the gospel is the word of this life? The answer is, because this eternal life which was with the Father is by it manifested to us. Indeed, we must here distinguish between *data* and *manifestata*, the giving and the manifesting of this life. Nor is it mine, but St Paul's own distinction, 2 Tim. i. 9, 10, where he informeth us that salvation, or life eternal, was 'given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.'

The truth is, eternal life, before the time of the gospel, was 'with the Father,' that is, did *latere quodammodo apud patrem*, lie hid in the Father's bosom, unrevealed to the world. As to the Gentiles it was altogether unknown, who therefore are said to 'sit in darkness and the shadow of death,' as being wholly strangers to this life. And as to the Jews, it was hid (as learned Davenant hath observed\*) *ex parte et comparative*. The greatest part of the Jews looked no higher than an earthly Canaan, and dreamt only of a temporal happiness to be accomplished by the Messiah; the discoveries of life were so dark that few could spell them, and that manifestation which any of them had was very obscure, in comparison of what is by the gospel. It is true eternal life was so far revealed in the Old Testament that the believing Jews attained to some knowledge of it, so as that they looked for it, and no doubt are in their souls possessed of it. Upon this account St Paul tells Timothy that the 'holy Scriptures' (to wit, of Moses and the prophets) 'were able to make him wise to salvation,' 2 Tim. iii. 15; and Christ bids the Jews to 'search the Scriptures,' John v. 39, because they 'thought' (which yet Christ reproveth not as a bare surmise) 'in them to have eternal life.' But still those discoveries were very imperfect in comparison of that knowledge which the gospel imparts; and therefore one † observeth an emphasis in the *ἡμῖν*, to us. Not to the patriarchs, not to the prophets, was this life, to wit, so clearly manifested, as to us, the apostles of Christ,‡ and by us to the saints throughout the world; in which respect St Paul, writing both to the Ephesians, chap. iii. 5, and the Colossians, chap. i. 26, styles not only the 'calling of the Gentiles' (which is as much spoken of by the prophets as any other evangelical truth), but the whole doctrine of life in the gospel, 'a mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, nor was in other ages made known

\* Daven. in Colos.

† *Vile Rivet*. Isag. Scriptur.

‡ Non patriarchis non prophetis, &c.—*Grot. in loc.*

\* *Bifariam potest exponi vel de Christo, vel de evangelio. —Calv. in loc.*

† *Vera evangelii doctrina. —Grot. ibid.*

‡ *Videtur omnino intelligere evangelium. —Vorst. ibid.*

§ *Cum beatitudo sit perfectum bonum et sufficiens oportet quod desiderium hominis quietet et omne malum excludat; naturaliter autem homo desiderat retinere bonum quod habet.*

—*Aquin.* prim. 2, quest. 5, art. iv.

to the sons of men, but is now revealed unto his holy apostles, and made manifest to his saints by his Spirit.\*

To sum it up in few words: eternal life is that mystery which could not have been found out by reason; neither the thing itself, nor the way to it, could by any human wit or industry have been at all discovered; and therefore it must be manifested, to wit, by a divine revelation, a spiritual illumination; and only the gospel is the word wherein God hath been pleased to vouchsafe the clear, distinct, and full manifestation of it, for which reason it is deservedly called the word of life.

To apply this briefly, what should the consideration hereof teach us but,

1. Thankfully to acknowledge what a rich treasure, a precious pearl, God hath vouchsafed to us in bestowing the gospel on us. Life is the most precious treasure in nature, eternal is the best of lives. Oh then, how singular is the worth of the gospel, which manifesteth this life unto us! And surely as the water of life itself, so the vessels that convey it to us, should be highly esteemed by us. We may truly say of all the ministers of the gospel, what that possessed damsel said concerning St Paul and the rest, Acts xvi. 17, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.' And what St John here saith of himself and fellow-apostles, we may no less justly say of ourselves, 'We shew to you that eternal life which was with the Father.' Shall the lawyer be valued, who sheweth you the way of preserving your temporal estate? Shall the physician be honoured, who sheweth you the way of prolonging your corporal life? And shall not the 'feet of them be beautiful who bring the glad tidings of peace,' and shew the way of obtaining eternal life? But, however, if *we* must be neglected, yet let the treasure we bring be gratefully esteemed by you. As you love your life, as you value eternity, prize the gospel.

That I may the more enhance the worth of the gospel, consider it not only absolutely and positively, but oppositively and comparatively.

(1.) In opposition to the law strictly taken, which, though there was a time when life might have been

\* *Primario, sanctis apostolis; secundario, aliis sanctis. Immediatè apostolis, mediatè Dei servis.—Daven, in Colos.*

obtained by it, yet now to us who are guilty of the breach of it, it threateneth nothing but death. Oh how sweet is the gospel to the transgressor of the law. In the law there is nothing but matter of fear, in the gospel of love; in the law God is against us, in the gospel he is Emmanuel, God with us. The law curseth, the gospel blesseth; the office of the law is to accuse and terrify, of the gospel to heal and comfort; finally, the law is a killing letter, but the gospel a quickening spirit.

(2.) In comparison with the state of the Old Testament, how much more obliged are we to God, who live in the times of the New, in respect of the clear revelation of this life unto us! God spake with Moses at the door of the tabernacle, but now he leadeth his spouse into the presence chamber. The Old Testament Christians saw through a veil, but now the curtain is drawn; with them it was the dawning of the day, with us it is full noon. Oh that we would praise the Lord for his inestimable goodness to us, upon whom the glorious light of the gospel shineth!

2. To endeavour that what this word of life is in itself it may be to every one of us; and as it is the word of life by way of manifestation, so it may be also by way of operation, effectual to bring us to that life which it revealeth to us. The more to quicken us in this endeavour, it would be seriously considered by us that though the gospel be intentionally the 'word of life,' yet accidentally it proveth to many the 'savour of death;' namely, those who receive with the left hand of infidelity what God offereth with the right hand of grace and mercy. The same sun both softeneth the wax and hardeneth the clay; the same earth is sweet in the grape and bitter in the wormwood; the same odour is a refreshment to the dove and poison to the beetle; the same herb, called rhododaphne, is a cure to men bit with serpents, and venomous to beasts; and the same gospel is both to believers a word of life, and to unbelievers a means of condemnation, whilst they love darkness rather than light, and choose death before life. Oh, therefore, let it be our prayer, among whom this word of life hath been so long preached, that it may come to us, as it did to the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 5, 'not in word only, but also in power,' so as it may become to every one of us the power of God to salvation and life eternal.

### SERMON III.

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us).—*  
1 JOHN I. 1, 2.

**A** SCRIPTURE to which I need no beginning, since it begins with *the beginning*, and that such a be-  
ginning as hath no beginning; a text to which a preface will be needless, because itself is a preface, and



yet such a preface as may withal be called a book. In reference to the epistle, it is a *proem*; in itself it is a *volume* well worth our most serious study and perusal. The apostle's duty and the gospel's excellency are the two sections which divide it, the first of which, consisting only of one leaf, though that having three columns, I read over the last time. The second expatieth itself into four large leaves, the first of which is written as it were on both sides, having a double exposition annexed to it. The one side was then despatched, and now we are to turn over the other; and, according to the most genuine sense, to handle these words as spoken concerning Christ, 'the Word of life, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifest to us.'

Nor is it without strong reason (as I conceive) that we should incline to this latter as the most congruous interpretation; for,

1. This phrase, *the Word of life*, primarily agreeth to Christ, since, when it is attributed to the gospel, it is in reference to Christ, and therefore eternal life is manifested in the gospel, because Christ, by whom we obtain that life, is revealed in it.

2. The things that are here asserted concerning this Word of life, are such as most properly belong to the person, rather than the doctrine, of Christ. The Word of life is said to be manifested, and that such a manifestation as was visible, nay, so as they not only heard and saw, but handled, which cannot literally be referred but to a corporeal substance; and to understand those expressions, with Socinus, metaphorically,\* is here very unsuitable, because the strength of the argument by which St John would confirm what he delivered concerning Christ, lieth in the literal acception, that sensible experience they had of him, by hearing, seeing, and handling.

3. Those phrases of *word* and *life* are most frequently, when used by this apostle, in all his writings applied to Christ. So in the beginning of his Gospel, John i. 1, when he saith, 'In the beginning was the Word, and in him was life,' it is without controversy spoken of Christ; so in the last chapter of this epistle, chap. v. 7, 11, 20, the term *Word*, in the enumeration of the Trinity, is plainly meant of Christ, and this life is said to be in him. And again, of him no doubt those words are spoken, 'This is the true God and eternal life.'

4. Add to all this,

That which (where there is an equal probability of reason on both sides) shall ever with me preponderate the scales is, that almost all expositors, as well ancient as modern, go this way, and interpret this concerning the person of Christ.

And now, following this construction, you may observe the person of Christ generally denominated and

\* Ut rei certam scientiam declararet, hisce metaphoris videndi, et contractandi oculis ipsis et manibus usus est.—Socin. in *Apoc.*

particularly exemplified, the former in the end of the first, and the latter in the greatest part of the second verse; of each in their order.

(1.) The general denomination here given to Christ is, that he is called the Word of life; and here are two substantives that singly deserve our consideration.

[1.] Christ is called the *Word*, an expression not altogether unknown to those heathens, Trismegistus and Plato, which made Amelius swear when he read the beginning of St John's Gospel, *Per Jovem, barbarus iste cum nostro Platone sensit verbum esse in ordine principii*. This barbarian (for so he was in his esteem) agreeth with our Plato, asserting the word to be in the order of a principle.\* But they, being ignorant both of the Trinity and of the Messiah, though they had the word, could not rightly understand the thing. As for the Jews, it is very likely it was known to them as the name of the Messiah at that time when St John wrote, because it was often used in the Chaldee language, which was then common among them. It were easy to multiply places in the Old Testament, where, when the Hebrew reads *Lord*, the Chaldee paraphrase rendereth it *the word of the Lord*. Thus where the prophet saith, 'Israel is saved by the Lord,' Isa. xlv. 17, the Chaldee read it, 'the word of the Lord;' and when in the Psalms it is said, Ps. ex. 1, the 'Lord said to my Lord,' the Chaldee read 'to my Word'; and these may suffice to let us see that the Jews, being no strangers to this language, could not but be acquainted with this term, a title which St John, of all the evangelical penmen, seemeth most to delight in, and therefore it is most frequent in his writings; nay, indeed only used by him in the New Testament, who is therefore called Θεολογος; and no wonder if he, who was a seraphical writer, made so much use of this sublime expression.† That I may fully and distinctly represent the several notions of this term *Word* among interpreters, be pleased to look upon it as capable of a double trope, to wit, a metaphor and a metonymy.

This phrase may not unfitly be looked upon as *metaphorical*. Christ resembled to a word, which, that I may the better explicate, take notice of that known distinction of *word*,‡ into λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and προφορικός, *conceptus mentis* and *sermo oris*, the inward conceit of the mind, and outward speech of the lips, to both which the Messiah is not unfitly compared.§

1. The conceit of the mind is called a word, the heart having its language as well as the mouth, and speech being nothing else but, as it were, the echo of that voice which is in the mind. Now, to this it is

\* Dr Hammond, *Annot. in Luc.*, cap. i.

† λόγον ἱερικῶς παραδόξον τι καὶ ὑπερφίως ἰφθίγγατο, &c.—Cyr. *Theas. Annot.* 19.

‡ λόγος et sermonem et rationem significat.—*Lact. Instituti*, lib. iv. cap. ix.

§ ἢ τοῦ λόγου διαπλὴ τίς ἐστιν ἔννοια.—*Bas. Hom.* xv.

which the ancients generally refer this title *word* when spoken of Christ,\* nor is it without good reason that they conceive the Messiah compared to the internal word, and that in a double respect.

(1.) *Primarily*,  $\kappa\alpha\tau' \epsilon\sigma\omega$ , in regard of his father; for, as the internal word is that offspring of the mind, so is Christ the Son of God; as the mind formeth its conceit by understanding the object proposed, so the Father generateth his Son by understanding his own essence. As the conceit issueth from the mind without any passion or trouble, † so is the Son begotten of the Father; as the generation of the word in the mind is immaterial and spiritual, without any carnal conjunction, so is the generation of the Son of God; finally, as the word which is framed in remaineth with the mind, so the Son, being begotten of, abideth in the Father; ‡ though withal, notwithstanding those analogies, there want not many discrepancies; for whereas the internal word is an accident to the mind, different from it in essence, and after it in time, so as, though the word could not be without the mind, the mind may be without the word, Christ is the consubstantial, co-eternal Son of the Father; and as there was no time when the Word was without the Father, so neither when the Father without his Word.

I cannot let this go without taking notice how graciously God is pleased to condescend to us in his language, § that though we cannot comprehend, we may apprehend something of those divine mysteries. This age hath brought forth a generation of preachers, who wrap up plain notions in cloudy expressions; but they are very unlike the Spirit of God, who clotheth sublime verities in plain similitudes. What mystery in all divinity more abstract than that of the generation of the Son of God! The prophet Isaiah is at his *quis enarrabit*, 'who shall declare it;' for of this many fathers || understand that question, and yet much of it is manifested to us by this common metaphor of a word.

(2.) *Secondarily*,  $\kappa\alpha\tau' \epsilon\zeta\omega$ , in regard of the creatures; ¶ for, as the internal word is that according to which a man effecteth all his actions, so is this Word

\*  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma \iota\sigma\tau\iota \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\upsilon \rho\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma \alpha\lambda\lambda' \omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\omega\delta\eta\varsigma$ , &c.—*Ignat.*, Ep. iii. ad *Magn.* [Either this quotation is incorrect, or the reference is wrong. The only passage resembling it in the epistle referred to is the following: I, X,  $\epsilon\varsigma \iota\sigma\tau\iota \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\delta\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ,  $\omicron\upsilon\kappa \acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron \sigma\iota\gamma\eta\varsigma \pi\rho\omicron\iota\lambda\delta\acute{\omega}\nu$ ,  $\omicron\varsigma \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha \iota\upsilon\eta\eta\sigma\iota\tau\eta\sigma\iota\omicron\nu \tau\omega \pi\acute{\iota}\mu\phi\alpha\nu\tau\iota \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$ .—*Ed.*]

Verbum hoc res est non sonus, &c.—*Hilar.*, lib. ii., de *Trinit.*

†  $\delta\iota\alpha \tau\omicron \acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\delta\iota\varsigma \tau\eta\varsigma \gamma\eta\mu\iota\omega\upsilon\varsigma \delta\iota\alpha \tau\omicron \sigma\upsilon\alpha\phi\iota\varsigma$ .—*Gr. Naz. orat.* ii. de *fil.* vide *Bas. loc. prœdict.*

‡ Mens cogitando verbum intra se generat, et sic generat verbum de se ut genitum habeat apud se, sic verbum divinum in ipso patre manet a quo gignitur.—*Fulg. ad Morim.* lib. iii. cap. vii. Vide *Aug de Trinit.*, lib. ix. cap. x.

§  $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma \kappa\acute{\alpha}\theta \eta\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \omicron\acute{\nu}\omicron\mu\alpha\sigma\iota \tau\omicron \theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu \acute{\alpha}\pi\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ .—*Cyr. Thes.* assert. 19.

|| *Bas. Chrysost.* Aug. cum aliis.

¶ *Aug. quæst.* lxiii, 83.

*principium omnia peragendi*, the 'beginning of the creation of God,' Rev. iii. 15, as he calleth himself, and by this Word it is that 'all things were made,' as this apostle saith in his Gospel, John i. 1, 2. And as the internal word may exist in the mind, and yet the external work not presently be; but the work cannot be unless the word is pre-existent in the mind;\* so Christ was from eternity with God before the world was made, but the world could not be made without this Word. It is a consideration which should teach us, when we contemplate the world's goodly fabric, to reflect on Christ, the former of it; even the creation (if considered by a knowing Christian) leadeth not only to God, but Christ; nor can we think seriously upon the making of the world, except we remember how it was made by a Word, which Word is Christ.

2. But further, the speech of the lips is that to which most properly this term word belongs, †  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  coming from  $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\omega$ , *dico*, to speak; and truly there wants not a fit analogy in this metaphor. It is true there are many things wherein this external word is unlike to Christ, as its extrinsecalness to the person, its temporary continuance, and the like; but there is one thing wherein it seemeth aptly to shadow forth Christ to us; for, as a man maketh known himself to others by his word, so is the Father by Christ revealed unto the world. Some, observing the various acceptance of this word  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , have taken hold of the signification of *definitio*, and applied it to this present purpose; for, as the definition doth explicate the thing defined, so doth Christ make known the Father. But the common signification of the word seemeth sufficiently to illustrate the same truth, and so accordingly is taken notice of by the fathers Irenæus and Augustine, ‡ who tell us he is therefore called the word, because by him the Father is made known, and through him we come to the saving knowledge of God. In this respect it is that Christ is called by the author to the Hebrews, chap. i. 3, 'the brightness of his Father's glory, and express character of his person;' and again, by St Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 4, the 'image of God,' *quia Patrem suum nobis conspiciendum præbet*, because he manifesteth his Father to us. §

And yet more particularly, as that which a man maketh known of himself by his word is his will, intent, and purpose, so hath the Father by Christ imparted to the world his eternal purpose and counsel concerning man's salvation. It is observable that Christ is called the 'power of God and the wisdom of God,' 1 Cor. i. 24, and the 'word of God,' in Scripture, Rev. xix. 13; and all fitly. He is the wisdom of God, because God's decrees and counsels

\* *Aug. de Trinit.*, lib. xv. cap. xi.

† Vide *Damase. de Orthod. fide*, lib. i. cap. vi.; and *Cyr. catech.* xi.

‡ *Filius dicitur verbum quia agnitionem patris facit.*—*Iren.*, lib. iv. cap. xiv. *Quia per ipsum innotescit pater.*—*Aug. de fid. et symb.* cap. iii.

§ *Slat. in Corinth.*



arc, as it were, made by him; the power of God, because they are made good, and accomplished by him; and the word of God, because they are made known and promulged by him. This is Epiphanius<sup>z</sup> his notion of word: he is called (saith he) the word, because he is the interpreter of his Father's counsels and mind to men. And that we may expound Scripture by Scripture, methinketh that of the author to the Hebrews is a comment upon this title, when he saith, 'God in these last days hath spoken to us by his Son,' Heb. i. 2, who therefore is the Word, because God by him hath spoken, and that most clearly to us. It is a distinction not unusual nor irrational which is made between *sonus*, *vox*, and *verbum*, a sound, a voice, a word, a sound being any kind of noise, a voice an articulate sound, and a word a significant voice. The application of it to this present business is very fit. The prophets of the Old Testament, they were as a *sound*; John Baptist, Christ's immediate forerunner, was as a *voice*; he is called so, Mat. iii. 3, 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness;' but it is Christ, and he only, who is the *Word*, distinctly and fully signifying to us the will of God concerning our salvation.

How great is our happiness (beloved) who live in these last days, and how great will be our misery if we be deaf to the word, by which in these last days God speaketh to us; and therefore let that apostolical counsel be acceptable, Heb. xii. 25, 'See that you refuse not him that speaketh;' rather let us hearken to him, learn of him, and seek from him divine knowledge. The truth is (brethren), thus the case now stands. Eternal life (to wit, the only way to it) is 'to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent,' John xvii. 3; 'No man knoweth the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him,' Luke x. 22. This 'only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,' John i. 8. Yea, he counselleth us to buy of him that eye-salve, by which only we may see; and the voice from heaven chargeth us with, 'This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him,' Mat. xvii. 5; and therefore, as Peter said to Christ, John vi. 68, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life,' so let us say, Blessed Jesus, whither shall we go? Whom should we hear but thee? Thou art the word of life!

2. I have done with the metaphorical; a word of the *metonymical* construction. And so Christ is called the *Word*, inasmuch as he is the subject matter of the word; and this we shall find true, both in a general and a special consideration.

(1.) In general, the whole word, either mediately or immediately, in a proxim or remote way, points at Christ. 'To him all the prophets,' as well as the

\* λόγος ἠνεμάσθηται ἰσχυρῶς ἰσχυρίως ἰστί τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ βουλῆμάτων.—*Epiph. Har. lxxiii.*

apostles, 'give witness.' The Scriptures are as the field, and Christ is the treasure hid in this field; they as the ring, and Christ as the diamond of great price, which giveth lustre to it. He is the centre in which all the lines in holy writ do meet, and this Word of life is the very soul and life of the word.\* Oh, let us in the reading of this sacred book break the bone, that we may suck the marrow; crack the shell, that we may feed on the kernel; open the cabinet, that we may find the pearl; 'search the Scriptures,' that we may meet with Christ in them; since, as that devout ancient said, he found no relish in Tully's oratorical writings, because he could not read Jesus there. So the very sweetness and excellency of the Bible lieth in this, that we may read Jesus, as it were, in every line of it. But

(2.) In special, *word* is as much as *promise*, when synecdochically taken, Acts i. 4; and thus as the Spirit is sometimes called the promise, Luke xxiv. 49, so Christ is called the word, *quasi eum dicas de quo locutus, vel quem pollicitus est dominus*; to wit, he of whom God speaketh, or whom he promised should come into the world. In this respect, those words of St Paul fitly explicate the phrase, where he tells Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 22, 'I continue witnessing no other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.' Christ is therefore the Word, because it is 'he whom they say should come;' or to use Zacharias his expression, he is that 'horn of salvation which God raiseth up in the house of David, as he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets which have been since the world began,' Luke i. 69, 70. Moses his great prophet, Balaam's star, Isaiah's tender plant, Jeremiah's branch, Zacharias's horn, Malachi his sun, are all of them mystical prophecies and promises of the Messiah.

It lets us see at once both the goodness and faithfulness of God, his goodness, in that before he gave his Son, he gave the promise of him; he was *promissus priusquam missus*, first assured verbally, then sent actually; and his faithfulness, in that as he promised, so he gave him; *sicut promissus sic missus*, he was not more mercifully promised than faithfully sent. It did not seem good to his wisdom to confer this jewel presently, but in the mean space, that the church might have somewhat to support her, he vouchsafed the promise of it. Divine promises are as sweet bits to stay our stomachs before the full meal of his actual performances. The promise of Christ's first coming was that which comforted the Jews, and the promise of his second coming is that which now reviveth the Christian church; and since we have found him making good his word in the one, we may assure ourselves he will fulfil it in the other; since as he was so good as to give a word, so he will be so good as his word, and give the thing, whatsoever it is, that

\* Christus velatus in veteri, revelatus in novo, in isto prædictus, in illo prædicatus.—*Boys. conc. lati. in post.*

he is pleased to promise; for so it was in that singular eminent promise of Christ, who is therefore not unfitly called the Word. And so much for that.

2. The other substantive yet remaineth, to wit, *life*, which is in the place of an adjective, and may be rendered as an epithet, the *living Word*;\* and look as Christ, when he is compared to bread, to a stone, it is with this addition, the 'bread of life,' a 'living stone,' to difference him from other stones, from common bread; so he is here called 'the Word of life,' to distinguish him from, and advance him above, other words. For whereas other words, though spoken by living persons, yet have no life in themselves, this word is the living word personally subsisting, or else, as he is called, the 'bread of life,' because he giveth and communicateth life to them that feed on him; so here the 'Word of life,' because he is the author of life to them that receive him. But the discussion of this falleth more fitly in the next part, to which therefore I pass on, namely,

II. The particular exemplification in which Christ is characterised as God-man, as God, as man. As God-man, he is styled the life, and the eternal life; as God, he is said to be 'the life which was with the Father;' as man, he is 'the life which was manifested.'

Of each of which, with all possible brevity and percuipuity.

*Part 1.* He is called 'the life,' that 'eternal life.' If you ask in what respect this agreeth to him, the answer is already hinted, but shall now be more largely prosecuted. He is the life, and that eternal, two ways, *ὄντως ὄντως* and *ἐνεργητικῶς*, *formaliter* and *efficienter*, in himself, and in respect of us, † as being both *vivus* and *vivificus*, living and giving life.

1. Christ is the life, and that eternal life, because in himself he liveth for ever, this is true of him primarily as God. This being one of his choice attributes, that he is the living God; and inasmuch as divine attributes are better expressed by the abstract than the concrete, he is fitly said, not only to be living, but life itself; and this life is most properly said to be eternal, because it is so both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, from everlasting to everlasting. Secondly, this is true of him as mediator, God-man; since, though there was a time when thus he began to live, to wit, at his assumption of our nature, and likewise his life on earth did expire, to wit, at his passion, yet now 'he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him,' Rom. vi. 9, but he is 'alive for evermore,' Rev. i. 18, and that 'to make intercession,' Heb. ix. 25.

2. But that which I conceive most suitable to the apostle's meaning, is, that Christ is said to be the life,

\* Genitivus loco epitheti capitur.—*Calv. in loc.*

† Vera vita per se subsistens et autor vitæ.—*Justin.* Perfectissimæ vitæ rationem habet, et spiritualem, cœlestem, æternamque vitam tribuit.—*Serrar.*

because he is the original of life to us. In this respect the abstract fitly agreeth to him, because life is in him as sap in the root, water in the fountain, to convey it to all that believe on him. In this sense it is that Christ useth it concerning himself, as appeareth by his own commentary: 'I am the life; whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,' John xi. 25. Hence it is, that he is called by the apostle Paul expressly 'our life,' Col. iii. 3. Nor is he only life, but eternal life; that life which, as Mediator, he vouchsafeth to believers, being eternal. Indeed, all creatures are beholden to him for their natural life:\* 'In him we live, move, and have our being;' but the life which believers have by him is an eternal life, according as he saith himself, 'I give to them eternal life,' John x. 28.

This is that life which, as the learned Davenant † observeth, (1.) *Christus promisit*, Christ promised to his disciples, and in them to all Christians, where he saith, Luke xii. 32, 'It is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom'; (2.) *promeruit*, by his own death he purchased for all believers, in which respect eternal life is said, Rom. vi. 23, to be 'the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord;' (3.) *preparavit*, being now ascended into heaven, he there maketh ready for us, according as he saith himself, John xiv. 2, 'I go to prepare a place for you;' and yet more, (4.) *inchoat*, he begins by the work of grace in the hearts of all the faithful, in which respect he that believeth on him is said to 'have everlasting life,' John vi. 47; and finally, (5.) *reddet*, he will at the last day consummate by glory. Indeed, then it is that, our bodies being raised, our persons shall be glorified, and this eternal life actually conferred; and therefore our blessed Saviour joineth these two together in that fore-mentioned place, John xi. 25, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' Thus, as the ointment ran down from Aaron's head to his beard, and thence to his skirt, so that eternal life which Christ, rising from the grave, personally enjoyeth, shall be communicated to all his members.

To sum it up; Christ, God-man, Mediator, is the life, that eternal life, in respect of his threefold offices of king, priest, and prophet. As prophet, he is the life by way of revelation, discovering this eternal life to us; as priest, by way of impetration, procuring this eternal life for us; as king, by way of collation, conferring this eternal life on us. And as the fulness of water is dispensed by the sea to the earth, and the fulness of light is communicated by the sun to the air, and the fulness of corn was divided by Joseph among the people; so the fulness of grace and glory, of life, even eternal life, is conveyed by Christ to his church, and therefore very justly doth this character belong to him.

And now, what should this consideration teach us, but,

\* Vita largitur dum omnia fovet et conservat.—*Justin.*

† Daven. in Coloss.



1. To bewail our sad condition whilst we are without Christ; for if Christ be the life, all that know him not, or believe not in him, must needs be in a state of death and damnation.

It is observable that St Paul, speaking of the Ephesians whilst in the state of unregeneracy, saith, chaps. ii. 1, 2, 12, they were 'dead in sins and trespasses;' and a little after, renders this as the reason, because at that time they were 'without Christ.' Indeed, as the body without the soul is corporally, so the soul without Christ is spiritually, dead. And, alas! whilst we are in this estate, we are without all hope of life, being under the sentence, not only of the first, but second death, and therefore John the Baptist, John iii. 36, saith expressly, 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Oh heavy load, and unsupportable, which, upon whomsoever it abideth, must needs crush him to pieces, and sink him to the depth of hell! Oh labour we then, both in respect of ourselves and others, to be sensible of our natural estate; and if we mourn over our friends' dead bodies, much more should we mourn over theirs and our dead souls!

2. To seek after this life, because it is eternal, and to seek it by union with Christ, who is the life.

Indeed, this temporal life may be used, but only that eternal life is to be sought. The life that now is, is a fleeting shadow, a vanishing vapour, a day, which, though never so pleasant, cannot be long; but the life which is to come, is a light ever shining, a leaf never fading, and such a day as shall know no evening. And now, tell me which is most rational, to seek after that life which is lost almost as soon as it is found, or after that life which, being once found, can never be lost? to catch after that which, being got, we cannot hold, or that which, being once got, we cannot lose? And therefore, that I may allude to our blessed Saviour's expression, John vi. 27, 'Labour not for that which perisheth, but for that life which endureth to eternity.'

To this end, let it be our continued care to gain, to assure our interest in, and union with, Christ. The Shunamite went to the prophet for raising her dead child; we must to Christ for the quickening our dead souls. It is very observable what St Peter saith to this purpose: 1 Peter ii. 4, 5, 'To whom coming, as to a living stone, we also are built up as lively stones;' so that if you know how we become living stones, it is by coming to, and being built upon, Christ as our foundation. The soul cannot enliven the body till infused into and united with it, nor can we receive life from Christ but by an interest in him: 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,' saith Christ himself, John vi. 54, 'hath eternal life. There is life, eternal life, in the flesh and blood of Christ, but then we must eat and drink it, that so this spiritual food may be incorporated into us, and we made one with Christ.'

3. Lastly, to set a high value upon Christ, and give him the glory of this great mercy, even eternal life. Of all the titles that do express the personal excellencies of the Lord Christ, that of the Word is most glorious; and of all those that do express the privileges we have by him, none so comprehensive as this of *eternal life*. 'To you who believe,' saith the apostle, concerning this living stone, 'he is precious,' 1 Peter ii. 7; and well he may, since he bestoweth so rare a jewel, and so invaluable a pearl, as eternal life upon us. Indeed, all our good and comfort is wrapt up in Christ: he is the bread to nourish us, the light to guide us, the life to save us. Are, then, any beginnings of this life wrought in us? any hopes of it assured to us? Let us look upon ourselves as vessels filled by this fountain, stars enlightened by this sun, carcases enlivened by this spirit, acknowledging what we have and hope for to be only and wholly from Christ, that as we have life from him, he may have thanks from us. Now, to him who is the life, that eternal life, be praise and glory in the church throughout all ages. Amen.

## SERMON IV.

(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)—1 JOHN I. 2.

AMONG the mystical interpretations of those four living creatures mentioned in Ezekiel, i. 5, and the Apocalypse, iv. 6, that of resembling by them the four evangelists is the most usual among the ancients, and St John is compared to the eagle by them all, except Irenæus,\* who likeneth him to the lion. St Jerome's reason is from the eagle's wing, which soareth highest of any bird; St Gregory's, from the eagle's eye, which is able to look upon the sun, and

\* Iren. Adv. Hæres. lib. iii. cap. ii.

both very apposite; for so doth St John in his Gospel look upon the Sun of righteousness, and soar high in contemplation of his divinity.\* Nor is this less observable in this epistle than in his Gospel, which both beginneth and closeth with the deity of Christ. Indeed, we have here in this beginning both the God-

\* Dum in ipsâ divinitatis substantiâ intendit, quasi more aquilæ oculos in solem fixit.—Greg. in Ezek. lib. i. hom. iv. Assumptis pennis aquilæ et ad altiora festinans de verbo Dei disputat.—Jer. in Mat. præfat.

head and manhood of the Messiah, and the union of both in one person set before us when he saith, 'That which was from the beginning,' &c.

The second character here given, and which now followeth to be handled, is of Christ as God, in those words, 'which was with the Father.' It is the same, no doubt, in sense with that in the Gospel, John i. 2, 'And the Word was with God;' and to this purpose Theodoret applieth that of the psalmist, Ps. xxxvi. 9, 'With thee is the fountain of life.' For the better explanation of it we must take notice of the noun, the preposition, and the verb: *Father, with the Father, was with the Father.\**

1. By the *Father* we are here no doubt to understand the first person in the sacred Trinity; indeed, it is a word that is taken in Scripture both *ὁσιωδῶς* and *ὑποστατικῶς*, essentially and personally. Essentially, it is common to all the persons; personally, it is only true of the first. When it is used of God in respect to the creatures, it is to be understood essentially, and our apostle so intends it when he saith, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath shewed, that we should be called the sons of God;' but when of God in order to the persons, it is to be construed personally, as here, † and in the next verse it is manifestly so used. And the first person is called the Father, say some, because he is the original of the Trinity, as connoting the relation he hath both to the Son and the Holy Ghost; but say others more properly, the first person is the Father only in relation to the second, who is his begotten after the most perfect way of generation, and so he only a Father in regard of him. But further,

2. The chief thing considerable is what this meaneth, that Christ the life is said to be *with* the Father; the answer to which I shall lay down both negatively and affirmatively.

(1.) Negatively, we must not strain the expression too far, as noting either an inferiority or separability between those two persons of the Father and the Word.

[1.] Not a separability, as if Christ were so *with* that he were *without* the Father, as a cloak which a man holdeth in his hands is with him, ‡ but yet without him. In this sense, *with* is opposed to *in*; but that in this construction it cannot be verified of Christ is plain, because he is said not only to be *with* but *in* the Father, John xiv. 10.

[2.] Not an inferiority, as it is sometimes used, when he that is said to be *with* doth after a sort depend upon the person with whom he is, in a way of subordination and subjection, in which respect the son is said to be with his father, the servant with his master, and the like. As for the eternal Son of God, St Paul saith ho

holdeth it 'no robbery to be equal with God,' Philip. ii. 6, and therefore his being *with* cannot infer a disparity. Indeed, this expression is true reciprocally: the Father with and in the Son, as well as the Son in and with the Father, John xiv. 11, the three persons being mutually with each other, and none superior to the other. But

(2.) Affirmatively, this exposition noteth,

[1.] The secrecy of Christ's subsistence before he came into the world. He was with the Father, to wit, in his bosom, and so hid from the world,\* as things in the bosom are recluse from common view; and the opposition of this 'with the Father' to 'manifesting,' giveth some ground for this construction.

[2.] The distinct personality of the Son from the Father. *With* the Father; that is, subsisting with the Father, and though not divided, yet distinguished from him. Hence it is that St Ambrose maketh use of this place to stop the mouth of Sabellius, who would confound the persons. The same person cannot be said to be with himself, but with another person, † and therefore the life which is with the Father must be a distinct person from the Father.

[3.] The essential unity between the Father and the Son. He that is with another, though he is distinct from, ‡ yet he must be near to, or else he could not be said to be with him. Nor are we to imagine this *with*, when spoken of the divine persons, to note a local (as a man who is in the same place is said to be with another) but an essential union, whereby, though they are personally distinguished, yet they are essentially united; and in this respect St Ambrose§ maketh use of this phrase to confute Eudoxius and Eunomius. This, then, is the Catholic faith, the Father and the Son are *alius* and *alius*, another and another person, but not *aliud* and *aliud*, another and another thing; and this preposition *with* may serve fitly to connote both these.

[4.] Lastly, the Son's eternity may be insinuated in this preposition, inasmuch as *with* stands in opposition to *before* and *behind*. As the Son could not be *before*, so neither is he *after* the Father, but *with* him; and therefore as the Father is eternal, so also is the Son. Indeed, in human generation the son is *after*, but in divine the Son is *with* the Father; nor can any moment be assigned to the Father wherein the Son was not. This will yet further appear by,

\* Qui ab eterno latuit absconditus in sinu patris.—*Tirin. in loc.* Verbum absconditum esse insinuat, cum subjungit et verbum erat apud Deum.—*Greg. Mor. lib. v. cap. xix.*

† *περὶ* declarat hypostaseos distinctionem.—*Bez. in loc.*

‡ Subsistens apud aliam subsistentem.—*Serror. ibid.* Quod erat apud deum non commixtionem confunditur sed manentis verbi apud patrem solidâ perfectione distinguitur, ut Sabellius annotat.—*Ambros. de Fid. lib. i. cap. v.*

§ Qui est apud alium distinguitur ab illo, quia nihil est apud se.—*Paul. Palat. in John.* Quod erat apud deum sempiternæ divinitatis in patre et filio inseparabilis unitas edocetur, ut erubescat Eudoxius et Eunomius.—*Ambros. de Fid. lib. i. cap. v.*

\* *Vide* Theod. *ibid.*

† Quando divinitas intra se describitur, nomen Patris sumitur *ὁσιωδῶς*. Quando autem fit collatio divinitatis ad creaturas, nomen Patris sumitur *ὑποστωδῶς*, et complectitur omnes personas.—*Gerard de Deo patre, lib. vi.*

‡ *Vid.* Fulgent. ad Monim. lib. iii.



3. The verb, which is set down in the preter-imperfect tense; and that we may comprise the full of it, take it in a double opposition to the present and the preterperfect tense.

1. It is not said which *is* with the Father. St John might have said so of him as man, he being then ascended to heaven and set down at the right hand of his Father; but here speaking of him as God, he useth the past time, 'he was,' that is, from all eternity with the Father; so that if any shall be so curious as to ask where this life was before it was manifested, Christ was before incarnate, the answer is, he was with the Father; by which the heresy of Elion and Cerinthus falls to the ground, who deny him any being before he was born of his mother. Upon this account it is that Tertullian saith excellently,\* The Father was alone before he made the world, and yet he was not alone, because the eternal life was with him; and in this respect wisdom saith, Prov. viii. 22, 23, 'The Lord' (not *created*, according to the unhappy mistake of the Greek, but) 'possessed me' (according to the true meaning of the Hebrew), to wit, as a father is said to possess his son, and this 'in the beginning of his way, before his works of old,' to wit (as it followeth in the next verse) 'from everlasting.' Suitably hereunto, Christ mentions a 'glory which he had with the Father before the world was,' John xvii. 4, from whence an ancient† strongly argueth that he was with the Father from all eternity, since he could not have had that glory if himself had not been. Besides, when we find these two words, *eternal* and *was*, here put together, we have reason to conceive that eternity is to be taken in its most proper notion, as it excludes not only ending but beginning; according to which it were a contradiction *in terminis* to say this eternal life was not with the Father from everlasting.

2. It is not said which *hath been*, but which *was*, to note that his subsistence with the Father is not now at an end, but this eternal life still remaineth with the Father. For that Aquinas maketh the notion of this word *was*, importing a thing so to have been, as that it doth not cease to be;‡ and therefore, when Christ is said to 'come forth from the Father,' it must not be taken in a rigid sense, and is best explained by this phrase of manifesting, his making himself known to the world in our nature being all that is meant by his coming forth from the Father; for the truth is, he so *was* as that he still *is*, and for ever *shall be* with the

Father. And in this respect it is not unworthy our observation, that the apostle doth not say, which was with the Father, and is now *separated* from him, but only is now *manifested* to us, to wit, so as that this life still is with him, and that to eternity.

To end this, let the meditation hereof,

(1.) Comfort us, inasmuch as it assureth us that Christ is very fit for the work he undertaketh, and therefore will accomplish it. The great design of the Messiah is to reconcile us to the Father; and who fitter to do this than he that was with the Father? Indeed, he that is here said to be with, is elsewhere said to be 'in the bosom of the Father,' John i. 18; and who more fit to make our peace than he who lieth in the Father's bosom? Upon which ground is that expression of St Paul, Eph. i. 5, 'He hath made us accepted in his beloved.' Christ and the Father are one by nature. Let us not doubt but he hath prevailed to make us one with God by grace now, and by glory hereafter.

(2.) Encourage us against that contempt and scorn which is cast upon Christian religion, as if we did place our trust in a mere man;\* and therefore the Jews upbraid us with that curse in the prophecy of Jeremiah, chap. xvii. 5, 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.' But he is not a mere man whom we trust in, and therefore that curse doth not belong to us; for as he became man of his mother in the fulness of time, so he was God with his Father before all time.

(3.) Exhort us to adore this eternal life which is with the Father with the same reverence and worship we give to the Father. We need not fear idolatry, whenas it is expressly said, John v. 23, that 'all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father.' Let, then, St Ambrose† his pithy counsel take place in spite of blasphemous heretics, *Jungat honorificentia patri filium quem junxit divinitas*. As the Father and the Son are joined together in unity of essence, so let us join them together in unity of worship, saying in words not much unlike those of the elders, Rev. iv. 11, 'Worthy art thou (O Jesus) to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou art that eternal life which was with the Father.'

3. The last character remaineth, which belongs to Christ as man, set forth in the word *manifested*, which, as being of singular concernment, is twice repeated, to wit, both in the beginning and the end of the second verse; for the better explication whereof these three things are briefly to be considered—

*What* this manifestation imports.

*Who* it is that was thus manifested.

*Why* the thing here intended is called a manifestation.

1. As to the first of these queries, it is generally answered, that by this manifestation we are to under-

\* Facit hæc ad demonstrandam fidei nostræ dignitatem.—*Qual. in Epist.*

† Ambros. de Fid. lib. i. cap. v.

\* Ante omnia Deus erat solus; ipse sibi solus, antem, quia nihil aliud extrinsecus præter illum, exterum ne tum quidem solus, habebat enim secum, quam habebat in semet ipso, rationem suam.—*Tertul. contr. Prox. cap. v.*

† Si antequam mundus esset, gloriam habuit apud deum et claritatem tenuit apud patrem ante mundus fuit; nec enim habuisset gloriam nisi ipse prius fuisset qui gloriam posset tenere.—*Tertul. de Trinil.*

‡ *Erat* significat aliquid fuisse et non esse adhuc determinatum, nec desinisse sed adhuc manere.—*Aquin. in Joh. Evang.*

stand the incarnation of the Son of God;\* nor is it without sufficient reason, since

(1.) This phrase is manifestly used elsewhere in this sense;† so by St Paul, with that explicatory addition, when he saith, 'God was manifested in the flesh,' 2 Tim. iii. 16; nay, without any addition, when he speaks of the appearing of Jesus Christ, i. 10; and which yet more confirms it, by our apostle himself in this epistle, and that twice in one chapter, 'he was manifested,' and 'the Son of God was manifested,' 1 John v. 5, 8, that is (as all agree) incarnated. But,

(2.) Besides these parallel scriptures, there is a convincing argument in the text itself; to which end you may be pleased to observe, that this parenthesis is interserted by the apostle on purpose to prevent an objection that might be made against, and so add a confirmation to what is asserted in the precedent verse, whereas St John there saith he and the rest heard, saw, and handled the Word of life. It might be asked,‡ How could this be? this living word being spiritual and immaterial. To which he implicitly answereth by adding, 'And the life was manifested,' to wit, in the flesh;§ in which respect the *and* after the Hebrew phrase may well be construed *for*,|| this being a strong reason to prove that this Word of life might be seen by them, since he was manifested to them, yea, which giveth much light and addeth much strength to the verity of this exposition. The apostle immediately knitteth these two together, manifesting and seeing, 'the life was manifested, and we have seen it;' whereby it appeareth that the manifestation spoken of is such as was visible, and therefore must be corporeal, since only that which is corporeal is visible.

2. That the manifestation is the incarnation is clear, but it would be further inquired, Who it is that was thus manifested? the answer to which appeareth by those two characters, 'the Word of life,' and the 'life which was with the Father.' It was not then the Father himself, but the Word with the Father, the second person in the sacred Trinity that was incarnated. True it is, the divine essence was incarnate; and therefore St Paul saith 'God manifested,' because the whole divine nature is in every person, but yet only as in one of the persons; and therefore our apostle saith, as here, the Word, so elsewhere 'the Son of God was manifested.' It is true that, as all external works, so this of the incarnation belongs to the whole Trinity,¶

\* Intelligens illam exhibitionem promissi Messiae per incarnationem factam.—*Illyr. in loc.*

† Per incarnationem so mundo manifestavit.—*Tirin. ibid.*

‡ Tacite objectioni occurrit, &c.—*Illyr. in loc.*

§ Manifestata est ipsa vita in carne, &c.—*Aug. ibid.*

¶ Particula *καὶ* pro *γὰρ* juxta Hebraicam phrasin accipitur.—*Zanch. ib.*

¶ Vido Damasc. de Orthod. Fid. lib. iii. cap. vi. Licet tota Trinitas in cap. iii. 8; hujus formæ assumptionem operata sit tamen neque, Spiritus sanctus sed solus filius eam sibi junxit.—*Tho. Aquin. pars. tertia, q. iii. art. i.* Vido Lomb. sent. iii. dist. i. litt. viii.; Aug. in Lib. de Dogm. Eccles. cap. ii.; Athanas. de Incarnat. Verbi.

but yet the termination of this work was only in the Son, as three persons may make a garment and only one weareth it, or three persons conclude a match, and only one of them, the person, married.

If it shall be further inquired why the Word, the second person, was manifested, divers reasons are given in answer by the ancients. (1.) By the Word all things were at first made; fit it is that the new, as well as the old creation, should be his work. (2.) This Word is the image of the Father, and therefore most fit to restore the image of God in man. (3.) The *Word* is the middle person in the Trinity, and therefore most fit to be mediator between God and man. (4.) He is the Word, to reveal his Father's will to the world, and therefore he fittest to be manifested in the flesh for this end. (5.) He only the Son, and therefore most suitable for him to become the Son of man, that he might make us the sons of God. (6.) In a word, had either the Father or the Holy Ghost been incarnate, there must have been two Sons in the Trinity, which were incongruous. (7.) But when all is said, that which we must acquiesce in is the good pleasure of the blessed Trinity, by whose mutual consent the second person, the Son of God, the Word of life was made flesh, and so manifested.

3. The last query cometh now to be unfolded, why the thing here intended is called a manifestation? whereby we shall see the aptitude of this phrase. And to this end I shall answer it, both by way of remotion and of position.

(1.) We must not by any means construe this phrase in favour of those who deny Christ to have a real body, as if Christ's coming into the world were only a phantasm or apparition,—a manifestation in, but no real assumption of, the flesh. In opposition to this heresy, Athanasius saith solidly,\* that as in the manifestation of this Word there was no transmutation of the Godhead into flesh, so neither a fantastical representation, but a true assumption of flesh. It is true the Holy Ghost only appeared in the shape of a dove, but he came not to redeem doves; Christ came to redeem man, and therefore would be truly man.

(2.) But if you will know the true reason of this expression, it is because the Deity in our flesh hath most clearly manifested itself to men.† The father's phrase, *θεοφανία*, is not much unlike those Scripture expressions, *επιφανεία* and *φανερῶσις*; and Gregory Nazianzen,‡ inquiring why Christ's nativity is called by this name, giveth this pregnant reason, *ἐφάνη γὰρ θεὸς ἀνθρώποις διὰ γεννήσεως*, because God made himself in a special manner manifest to the world by coming into it.

The truth is, never did God so familiarly reveal himself as when he took our nature. Indeed, there is a manifestation of God in the works of his creation;

\* Vide Athanas. de Salutari Adventu Christ.

† Vide Dyonis. ep. iii. ad Cajum.

‡ Naz. Orat. xxxviii.



'the invisible things of his power and Godhead are seen' in this visible fabric, Rom. i. 20; but this is only of his attributes, as a picture discovereth the art, but not the person, of the painter. There was indeed some manifestation of God to the patriarchs of old, and (as is probably conceived) it was the Son of God which did appear unto them;\* yea, and that in an human shape, for one of those three men that came to Abraham is not irrationally thought to be the second person in the Trinity; but still those apparitions were but at some times, and to some persons, and indeed were but, as Irenæus† calleth them, *præudia veræ incarnationis*, forerunners of his incarnation, and as it were the dawning of the day, wherein the Sun of righteousness did arise. Indeed, so clearly did the Deity manifest itself in Christ incarnate, that when Philip desireth him to shew him the Father, Christ tells him, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' John xiv. 9. Thus, as the candle giveth its light through the lantern, and the face is seen through the veil, so did the Godhead manifest itself through our flesh.

But perhaps you will say, How can this be, that the Deity should be manifested in flesh? Whatsoever is a medium of discovering anything must be somewhat proportionable to that it discovereth. Now, flesh and God are at a distance, nor is there any proportion between them; but beloved St Paul, speaking of this, calls it a 'great mystery,' 2 Tim. iii. 16; and therefore, if we cannot see how it should be, let that content us. Besides, it cannot be denied but that the assumption of our flesh was in respect of the Deity, not a manifestation, but an obscuration, and therefore it is said of him by St Paul, 'he emptied himself, he humbled himself,' Philip. ii. 5, 6, when he took on him our nature; but yet still in respect of us it was a manifestation.

To clear this briefly, and yet fully, you must know that objects of excellent brightness are best manifested through allaying mediums. Thus the sun, being in itself so transcendently lightsome, cannot be looked on by us as it shineth in its own lustre, but best conveyeth its light to us through the clouds; and hence it is that, whilst the clouds obscure, they make the sunbeams to us more obvious. The same is the case in this present matter: God's face in itself is so bright, that we cannot see it and live, which made the Israelites desire that God would no more speak to them by himself, but by Moses, Exod. xx. 19; whereas in the face of Jesus Christ, through the cloud as it were of our humanity, God is become familiar with men, and we partake of the 'light of the knowledge of the glory of God,' as St Paul speaketh, 2 Cor. iv. 8.

To apply this, here is matter of,

1. Exultation, and that upon several grounds.

\* Non pater in rubo, non pater in eremo, sed filius Moysi locutus est.—*Ambr. de Fid.* lib. i. cap. v. Hilar. de Trin. lib. iv.

† Iren. lib. iv. cap. xxxvii.

(1.) Because it is spoken of as a thing already accomplished. It is not the Life *may be*, or *shall be*, but *was*, manifested. This manifestation was that which the saints of the Old Testament waited for,\* and rejoiced in the very expectance, for so it is said by Christ concerning Abraham, 'He saw my day, and rejoiced.' Much more cause have we to rejoice in the real performance.

(2.) When we look upon the impulsive cause of this manifestation, which was no other than free love and mercy. *Revelatio deitatis, revelatio charitatis.* In the appearing of our Saviour Christ there was an appearing of the grace of God, in the manifestation of this eternal Life was a manifestation of immense love to the sons of men. And therefore saith Athanasius,† our Saviour gave a great experiment of his singular affection, in that, ἀράνης ὦν καὶ ἀόρατος ἐπέφανε, being in himself invisible, he was pleased to manifest himself as the eternal Word to us.

(3.) And yet, lastly, considering this manifestation in the effect, whereby it appeareth that as he was manifested *to us*, so likewise *for us*, even our redemption. The pagans, when any great works are done beyond the common course of nature, ascribe it to the apparition of some deity. The Son of God appeareth to do a great work, such as not all the creatures in heaven or earth could possibly have effected; this Life was manifested, yea, and he was manifested, that we might have life through him. Why art thou strange, poor trembling soul, and standest afar off from him, who draweth so nigh to thee? The blessed God was willing to manifest the riches of his love, and that all terror might be prevented, he appeareth as a man. God is come down, and that not in a flaming fire, roaring thunder, warlike armour, but clothed with the garment of flesh. Thus whilst he veileth his greatness, he unveileth his goodness, and therefore say not, 'Who shall go up to heaven, to bring down this life to us? or down into the deep, to fetch it thence?' Rom. x. 6. It is nigh us, even manifesting itself in, yea, conveying itself to us by our flesh.

2. Excitation, to endeavour that as this life was manifested *to and for*, so it may be *in*, us. Those words in the Canticles, chap. viii. 6, 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart, and a signet upon thy arm,' are by the ancients understood as the words of Christ to his spouse, thereby stirring her up to pious affections and religious actions, *in quibus figura Dei Christus luccat*,‡ by which Christ may shine forth, and it may appear that this life liveth in her. That expression of St Paul, 'holding forth the word of life,' Philip. ii. 16, is by some§ referred to Christ, whom we must hold forth to the world by pious and exemplary con-

\* Cœlesti lumine perfusi illius venturum expectabant, et videre exoptabant, quem illi futurum præstolantur, apostoli præsentem conspexerunt.—*Iren.* lib. iv. cap. xxiv.

† Athanas. de Incarnat.

‡ Ambr. de Virg. lib. i.

§ Zanch.

versations, that so as he was pleased to manifest himself in our nature, we may manifest him in our lives.

I end this first general, which is the Messiah's character, who is the object of the gospel.

He is the Word, let us give ear to him.

He is the Life, let us seek it from him.

He is the eternal Life with the Father, let us adore him.

He was in due time manifested, let us acknowledge him.

And to this Word of life, who being from eternity with the Father, was thus pleased to manifest himself, let us give in heart, in word, in life, faith and affection, praise and thanksgiving, obedience and subjection, to all eternity. Amen.

## SERMON V.

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.*—1 JOHN I. 1.

SUCH is the transcendent worth of Christ, the Word, that no words can declare it; of the Word of life, that no tongue can set it forth to the life; of the Life manifested, that no expressions can manifest it; and yet even in these very characters, much of the excellency of Christ is delineated before us, so that what the psalmist said of Jerusalem, Ps. lxxxvii. 3, 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God,' I may say of Christ as he is here represented, 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou Son of God.' Nor is there less verity and dignity in these sayings, that as the one cannot but attract our love, so the other may engage our faith. This holy apostle and the rest had good ground for clear evidence, convincing proof of what they uttered, for it was no more than what sensible experience did assure them of: 'That which we have heard,' &c.

It is that part of the text I am now to handle, the commendation of the gospel from certain tradition, as being that which the apostles had 'heard, and had seen with their eyes, and their hands had handled, of the Word of life.' 'Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established;' so runs St Paul's maxim, 2 Cor. xiii. 1. Lo, here no less than three witnesses, to wit, three senses, hearing, seeing, handling, produced by St John, to assert the truth of what he writeth. Some expositors\* restrain it particularly to the resurrection, of which the apostles first heard by Mary Magdalene, afterwards they saw him themselves, and one of them handled him, putting his hand into his side, John x. 27; yea, Christ bids them all to see and handle him, Luke xxiv. 39. Indeed, the special work of the apostles was to be witnesses of the resurrection, and therefore it is not improbable that St John might have a singular eye to it, but yet we shall do best to take Scripture in the fullest latitude, and so refer this *ad totam verbi incarnati aconomiam*, to the whole economy of the Word incarnate. Thus

according to the several ways whereby Christ was pleased to manifest himself to them, he was heard, seen, and handled by them. He manifested himself in flesh, and so was handled; in his miracles, and so was seen; in his words, and so was heard.

That we may the better understand both the intent and extent of these phrases, let us consider them severally.

1. 'That which we have heard, of the Word of life.' It is a clause which admits of several references: To Moses and the prophets; 'That which we have heard,' out of their writings concerning the Messiah;\* for it is mentioned of both, that they were 'read in the Jewish synagogues every Sabbath-day,' whither the apostles often repaired.

2. To the scribes and pharisees; that which we have heard from their mouths in their expositions upon Moses and the prophets. The pharisees themselves preached those things concerning the Messiah that were fulfilled in him, and so against their wills gave testimony to him whom they rejected.

3. To John the Baptist; that which we heard from him, who was Christ's harbinger to go before him, and pointed at him with an *Eecce*: 'Behold the Lamb of God.'

4. To the voice from heaven; that which 'we heard when we were with him in the holy mount,' 2 Peter i. 17, 18. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' the Father himself by this extraordinary way testifying of him.

5. Or lastly (and as I conceive most suitably to the apostle's meaning), to Christ himself; that which we heard from his own mouth, for so it seemeth to be expounded at the fifth verse, 'the message that we heard of him;' not from others, at second hand, but immediately from his own lips.† We read in the Gospel that 'he opened his mouth and spake,' Mat. v. 1; and as generally to the multitude, so more especially to his

\* Auribus audire, oculis videre salutem, tractavere manu corpus de morte receptum.—*Tertul. contr. Marc. lib.*, cap. vii. Prius audierunt, quia Dominus resurrexit, postea vero oculis inspexerunt, et contractarunt pedes et manus et latus ejus.—*Didym.*

\* ἀκηκόαμεν διὰ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν.—*Æcumen. Hug.*

† ἀκούειν Hoc in loco non significat, ex aliorum narratione aliquid accipere, sed suis auribus aliquid audire.—*Bez. in loc.* Audivimus non ab aliis sed ipsomet filio Dei.—*Justin. ibid. Aug. de Serm. Dom. in Mat.*



disciples, unfolding to them the mysteries of the kingdom. *Aperuit os suum qui prius aperuit ora prophetarum*, he that opened the mouths of the prophets, at last openeth his own mouth; and *oracula quasi auracula*, those sacred oracles, which like honey dropped from his lips, were distilled into their ears, who continually sat at his feet to receive instruction from him. Nor was it a naked hearing which the apostle here intends, but an hearing so as to understand and believe; for it is such an hearing as put them upon declaring, which could not have been unless they had understood, nor would have been except they had believed themselves. This is that which perhaps the iteration of it at the third verse may insinuate, 'they heard, and heard,' to wit, with the ear and with the heart; and that is the right hearing, when there is *internus fidei assensus* as well as *externus auris auditus*,\* an inward assent accompanying our outward attention. That which Christ spake to his disciples, he many times spake to many others; but as when the instrument sounds a multitude hear it, yet only the musical ear understands and taketh delight in it, so only the apostles heard with a divine religious ear, by which means it affected their hearts, and inclined them to declare and write that they had heard.

2. 'That which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have looked upon.' The next sense, which is brought in as a witness, is their sight, and it is set forth with abundance of emphasis; to unfold which, observe the extensiveness of the object, and the intensiveness of the act.

(1.) This *that*, the object, is of a large extent, and may be taken in reference to both his natures, to wit, human and divine.

[1.] The apostles saw his humanity, beheld him a man, altogether like to themselves, sin only excepted, they saw him eating, drinking, walking, and thereby expressing the actions of an human body; yea, they saw him in weariness, hunger, thirst, and so subject to the defects of our frail nature.

[2.] They saw his divinity, to wit, in the effects of it, those powerful miracles which were wrought by him. Such works may well challenge our aspect. They saw him cleansing the lepers, curing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, nay, raising the dead; and this interpreters conceive St John especially to aim at, expounding him by himself in the Gospel, John i. 14, where he saith, 'We saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth;' yea, besides those miracles which he wrought among men whilst on earth, they saw his glorious transfiguration on the mount, his raising himself from the grave, and his wonderful ascending into heaven, when from mount Olivet 'a cloud received him out of their sight.' All this, and whatever else conduced to declaring either his man-

hood or his Godhead, may be very well comprehended in the  $\delta$ , 'that which we have seen.'

(2.) The act is set forth with a great deal of advantage, to express the intensiveness of it. For,

[1.] It is not barely 'that which we have seen,' but 'that which we have seen *with our eyes*,' an addition which may seem a  $\pi\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\sigma\mu\delta\varsigma$  (since if we do see, it must be with our eyes), but is indeed an  $\epsilon\tilde{\xi}\eta\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , since, as Chrysostom well observeth concerning the like phrase of hearing with our ears,\* it is  $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\delta\upsilon\nu\ \eta\theta\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omega\nu$ , the usual custom of men, when they assert anything whereof they are fully assured, and that to those who, by reason of the strangeness of it, may seem to doubt, to say, I heard it with these ears, I saw it with these eyes, and these hands handled it.

[2.] It is not once, but twice, nay, thrice expressed, as if there lay a great deal of weight in the evidence of this sense, as indeed there doth; and therefore, that we may be assured they did see what they declared, it is not only mentioned so emphatically in the first verse, we 'have seen with our eyes,' but again in the second, 'the life was manifested, and we have seen it;' and yet again, *ut dilucidior fieret sententia et certior veritas*,† that the sentence which was obscured by the parenthesis might be made more plain by an epanalepsis, and withal, that the truth of what is asserted might appear more certain, it is repeated at the third verse, 'that which we have seen and heard.'

[3.] To express it yet more fully, here is another word‡ added, more significant than the former, 'which we have looked upon.' It is the same with that which is used in the Gospel, John i. 14, 'we saw his glory;' and there are several things which it doth superadd.

*First*, That they saw not only with bodily, but with mental eyes. They saw *cum dijudicatione*, considering and judging what they saw, and which upon mature judgment was found to be as it appeared; for so Didymus§ referreth seeing to the body, and looking on to the mind. Indeed, this was it which differed the apostles from the rest of the beholders. Christ had many spectators of his person and works, but the great part only saw them with their eyes, but did not look upon them with their judgments, so as to ponder and consider aright of them, and therefore were not converted by them; whereas the holy apostles so saw, that they looked on with serious and deliberate inspection.

*Secondly*, That what they saw was not done privately in a corner, but to the open view. The word here used is the root of  $\Theta\epsilon\alpha\tau\epsilon\delta\omicron\nu$ , which signifieth a stage, or *theatre*; and that you know is an open place, Acts x. 14, nothing more public than that which is

\* Chrysost. in Ps. 441. Efficax locutio, non enim satis fuit, dicere *vidimus*, sed *alidit oculis nostris*.—Grot. *ibid*.

† Zanch. *in loc*.

‡  $\Theta\epsilon\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon\alpha\iota$  spectare plus quam  $\delta\omicron\epsilon\alpha\iota$  videre.—Zanc.

§ Didym. *in loc*. Multa videmus oculis qua revocata ad iudicium animi secus essent.—Aret. *ibid*. Sollicitam et sagacem inspectionem indicat.—Justinian. *ib*.

\* Vide Lor. Did. *in loc*.



acted upon a stage. Thus it is said of him after his resurrection, that 'God shewed him openly,' though not so openly as before, when he went about in several places doing good, and working miracles, in the sight not only of his apostles, but the people.

*Thirdly*, That what they saw was not a transient, but a continued sight. It was not one, but many miracles they beheld; not once, but often that they saw him; and therefore it was not probable they should be deceived. St Luke saith, Christ was 'seen of his apostles after the resurrection for forty days,' Acts i. 3, and before, for many years together. To this purpose is Grotius\* his gloss upon the text, *diu multumque*, we frequently, constantly, beheld the great things that were done by him.

*Fourthly*, Lastly, that they so saw as to believe; and believing, to rejoice; and rejoicing, to admire at those things which they beheld. To this purpose is that of the Greek scholiast, beholding with our eyes, we wondered at that we saw; for that the Greek word is used sometimes to signify, to see a thing with admiration† and amazement. Indeed θαύματα quasi θεάματα, *miracula, spectacula*, miracles are such sights as may well raise our admiration at the beholding of them. No wonder that Christ's wonders were seen with wonder. Besides,

3. And our hands have handled. The last of the senses, but not the least, nay, greatest in point of evidence, is that of handling. Nor is it unworthy our observation, how fit a gradation is here made.‡ The apostle proceeding still higher and higher, he begins with hearing, as being that sense which is most capable of deception; from thence he riseth to that of seeing, which is more certain, one eye-witness being of more value than ten ear-witnesses;§ and yet because seeing might pretend *ludibria oculorum*, the eye might be subject to delusion, he addeth another sense, which as it is *crassior*, so it is *certior*, more gross, so it is more sure, asserting that what he declared with his mouth, was that which not only his ear and eyes, but his hands, gave testimony to.¶ That one of the apostles, namely, Thomas, did handle him with his hands, is expressed; and where it is said of this apostle, that he leaned in his bosom, it implieth that he handled him; nay, inasmuch as we find that the other apostles did eat, drink, converse with him, nay, that he saith to them, 'Handle and see,' Luke xxiv. 39: it is not improbably conceived that they might all handle him, so much the rather considering that it is

\* Grot. in loc.

† Θιᾶσθαι ἰσσι τὸ μετὰ θάυματος καὶ θαμβήσας ὁρᾶν.—*Œcumen.*

‡ Ipsa gradatio crescentium verborum valdè facit ad certitudinem.—*Illyr.*

§ Pluris est unus oculus testis, quam auritis decem.—*Plaut. Trucul.*

¶ Ipse et auditus et visus, et, no phantasma crederetur, tractatus.—*Tert. adv. Prox. c. 15, Vide Aristot. de an l. 2, text 94.* Eos piè ad robur fidei invitabat ad tactum.—*Sim. de Cass. l. 14.*

here affirmed by St John, not only of himself, but others, 'our hands have handled.' Nor doth this handling only refer to his person, but his miracles, the fishes and loaves which he gave them to feed so many thousands with, the dead bodies which he raised to life,\* whereby the reality and verity of his miracles did the more clearly appear to them.

There are only two questions would be discussed ere we apply this truth.

1. How all this can be verified in reference to 'the Word of life, which was with the Father'? Can a spiritual substance be handled, an immaterial be visible, an incorporeal be heard? And such is the Word of life; and yet thus it is here asserted, 'we have heard, we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.'

To which the answer is easily returned, that this person, the Word of life, was made flesh;† or as it is in the next verse, was manifested, to wit, in human nature; and so though in himself he were invisible, yet in flesh he was visible and palpable. This is that which perhaps may be insinuated in the preposition *περὶ* here inserted. It is not said *the*, but *of*, or *concerning the Word of life*, because it was not the very Word itself, but that nature which the Word assumeth to itself; though withal, inasmuch as that nature was assumed into unity of person with the Word, it was the Word itself they saw and handled; and so *περὶ τοῦ λόγου* is only an Hebraism, and equivalent to *τὸν λόγον*, as *περὶ πνεύματος* in the Acts answereth to *τὸ πνεῦμα*, and so the Syriac readeth it 'the word of life.'

2. What might be the reason why the apostles had such sensible confirmation of what they did declare?

The answer to which is, because,

(1.) The holy apostles were to be the first publishers of the doctrine concerning Christ come in the flesh.‡  
 (2.) The doctrines they were to publish, were such as were very incredible to human reason, and therefore presently found great opposition. Nay, yet further,  
 (3.) these apostles were not only to be the first declarers, but, by reason of persecution, were to be in some kind or other sufferers for the truth of that which they did declare.§ Now, upon these considerations it was most requisite these planters of Christianity should be bold and resolute in declaring and defending what they declared. Rationally, much less religiously, bold they could not be, unless strongly and undoubtedly

\* Tertium sensum adjicit tactum nam is quoque intervenit tum alibi tum in panibus multiplicatis et Lazaro.—*Grot. ibid.*

† Verbum caro factum sic sermonem vitæ videre possint.—*Aug. in ep.* Verbum Dei quod per se invisibile, vidont Apostoli, tractant, &c.—*Hier. in Amos.* Filius Dei in suâ naturâ invisibilis in nostra naturâ visibilis factus est, &c.—*Cypr. de bapt. Vide Zanch. Justin. Bez. in loc.*

‡ Necessarium fuit ut apostoli eo tactu, visu, crederent, quippe qui ad pesteritatem certitudinem suæ fidei crant transmissuri.—*Paul. Pal. in Joh.*

§ Cum displiceret ipsum testimonium, passi sunt omnia quæ passi martyres, &c.—*Aug. in ep.*

confirmed in, and assured of the truth of those things they did declare; and this confirmation they could not have by a better way than sensible demonstration.\* Hence it is that the apostles give this as the reason of their resoluteness, 'We cannot but speak the things we see and hear,' Acts iv. 20; and St Luke, Acts. i. 3, † calls those proofs which the apostle had of Christ's resurrection, by seeing and conversing with him, *τεκμήρια*, ‡ which our translation not unfitly rendereth 'infallible proofs,' by which therefore they were no doubt strengthened in their faith, and animated with courage.

To apply this to ourselves in several particulars.

1. Here is matter of confutation, and that both direct and collateral.

(1.) This directly confuteth a double heresy.

[1.] That of the Marcionites, and Manichees§ (whereof St Austin saith Cerdo was the author), who assert all things Christ did, were *κατὰ δόξαν*, only in appearance, denying that he was truly man. But surely when we read that he was not only heard, but seen and handled, we must needs acknowledge him real man. An apparition may indeed deceive the sight, but it cannot the feeling; Christ was not only seen but felt; hence it is that this is his own argument to his disciples, when they doubted whether he were not a spirit: 'Handle me, see me, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have,' Luke xxiv. 39.

[2.] That of the Nestorians, who assert two persons, the one the Son of God, the other the son of Mary; but were it so, St John's words could not be verified, they saw and handled the Word of life, for it was only the manhood they saw and handled; and if the man Christ were a distinct person from the Word of life, they could not be said to handle the one when they handled the other; and therefore we do from these, and such other like places, strongly assert the unity of the two natures in one person, it being one and the same person, who, as God, was invisible, and as man visible; as God, was from the beginning, as man, had a beginning; as God, was immaterial, and as man palpable. ||

(2.) This collaterally confutes that error of the papists, who assert the flesh and blood of Christ to be corporally present in the holy sacrament, so as that the bread and wine are by a miraculous work transubstantiated into it; indeed, from this very clause, a strong argument may be drawn, and that two ways.

[1.] To prove that Christ's flesh and blood is not there corporally present, because then it must be

visible. It is an undoubted maxim in philosophy, *omne corporeum est quantum*, quantity is inseparable from corporeity; and being so, it cannot but be visible and palpable; nay, since it implieth a contradiction for a thing to be a body, and not to be visible, because it is as much as *to be*, and *not to be*, a body, it is that which omnipotency itself cannot do, and therefore in vain is a miracle pretended.\*

[2.] To prove that the bread and wine in the holy sacrament are not transubstantiated, but remain bread and wine still, because it is a clear axiom, bodies are such in their own nature as they present themselves to the sense, when it is every way disposed and fitted for the object. Now that which at the holy table offereth itself to the view, and taste, and touch of the most rectified organ, is not flesh and blood, but bread and wine; and therefore, if St John's proof here be valid, that which he declared was true, because he saw and handled it. We may with the same validity prove it is bread and wine in the sacrament, because by seeing and handling we find it to be such.

2. Here is matter of conviction, to persuade us of the verity of the apostolical writings. It is true, the chief reason why we are to receive their writings is because they were moved, and extraordinarily assisted in the penning of them, by the Holy Ghost; but yet withal this may be a secondary reason of our assent to what they testified and wrote, because it was no other than that which they had heard, nay seen, nay handled. We all think it just and reasonable to believe a man when he speaketh not by hearsay, but personal experience; and why, then, is it not reason that we should believe the apostles, who declare nothing but what they heard, saw, and handled? This was so rational an argument in St John's account, that, speaking concerning Christ's being thrust through with a spear, he thus argueth, John xix. 35, 'He that saw it bare record, and his record is true;' therefore true, because of that which he saw; and hence it is that John the Baptist, complaining of the Jews' infidelity in rejecting Christ, useth this aggravation, John iii. 32, 'What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony;' and in the same chapter, ver. 11, Christ himself taketh up the same complaint to Nicodemus, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and you receive not our witness.'

To drive this nail to the head; there are but three things that can possibly be objected against this reason, which being cleared, I conceive it will remain unanswerable, and such as may convince a Jew, a pagan, if they were not wilfully blind.

That they say they heard, saw, and handled, what they never did, and so were no better than deceivers.

That they did only think they saw such things, but in truth did not, and so were themselves deceived.

That that which they did hear, see, handle, will not

\* πᾶν σωματικόν ὄρατον ἴστι καὶ ἄπτον.—*Plut. in Trin.*

\* Quod videt aliquis potest nuntiare alteri, &c.—*Didym. ib.*

† Vide Quintil. l. 5. c. 9.

‡ Τεκμήρια Græci indubitata et necessaria signa vocant.—*Bez.*

§ Aug. de hæres.

|| Ἰὼς ἦν καὶ ἀδαιρέτος ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ θιατὸς καὶ ἀβίαιος, &c.—*Œcumen. ὁ ἀσχερὸς σαρκούται, ὁ ἄσχατος ὀράται ὁ ἄσχερὸς ἄσχεταί.—Naz. oral. 38.*



amount to a proof of what they declared, namely, that Jesus was the Christ. To all which I doubt not but to return a full answer.

1. As to the first, such an accusation cannot equitably be charged on any, except they either were men of loose and flagitious lives, and so not likely to make any conscience of a lie; or else that there were some great advantage apparently accruing by such a lie, which perhaps might have an influence, not only on a loose but a civil person. Now neither of these can in this case be alleged; for,

(1.) The apostles were men of holy and exemplary lives, men that did 'shine as lights in the world' by their good conversation, Philip. ii. 15; men whom those grand apostates, and enemies of Christianity, could charge with nothing but simplicity; and therefore no reason to suspect that they should tell such a gross lie, as to say they heard, or saw, or handled what they never did.

(2.) It is sufficiently manifest that they were not allured to bear this testimony by any gain, either of honour, or profit, or pleasure; \* nay, instead of gain, there was nothing but loss; they were hated of all men, for Christ's name's sake; they forsook father, mother, friends; they were exposed to hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, tortures, and most of them to death itself. *Nemo gratis malus est*, no man will be wicked for nothing, nay, invent and maintain, and stand in a lie, when no benefit, but a great injury, redounds to him by it; and, therefore, we may justly conceive that it was nothing but the force of truth that prevailed upon them, and the Spirit of God burning as a fire in their bosoms, which could not be concealed.

2. As to the second, these three things are very considerable.

(1.) That where the object is sensible, if there be a fit organ, an apt medium, and a convenient distance, the sense is not, cannot be, deceived, nor is there any demonstration more certain. Now these things, of which the apostles bear witness, were things placed within the compass of sense, as being concerning a man, his birth, death, and resurrection, and the like, all which are sensible objects; and they who tell us they saw these things were the companions of this man, always near to, conversing with, him; nor did ever any deny them to be men of perfect senses; and, therefore, there is no reason to suspect a deceit.

(2.) That it was not one or two, or a few, but many, who had this sensible experience. There were twelve who did continually attend upon Christ; and, after his resurrection, he was seen of above five hundred, 1 Cor. xv. 6. Though one man's sense might be bad, or fallible, yet it is not imaginable that so many were deceived, especially considering that all they who testify to us what they saw, agree for substance in one and the same testimony, not varying from, nor jarring against, one another.

\* *Vie Grot. de verit. Chris. Relig. l. ii.*

(3.) And yet, once more, it is *plurium sensuum experimentum*, they had the proof of many senses, and if one, yet it is not likely that all should be deceived; \* if the ears, yet sure not the eye; if the ear and eye, yet not the hand; if any, yet not all of these; and, therefore, it is very improbable, nay, impossible, they should be deceived.

3. As to the last, the contrary will plainly appear, if we consider these two things.

(1.) The proving those prophecies which were made concerning the Messiah to be fulfilled in him, is an evident proof that he was the Messiah; but by their senses they might and did prove these things to be accomplished in him, for they saw him born and dying, and rising according to the Scriptures, the greatest part of those things which are foretold being within the reach of sense.

(2.) The proving him to be a worker of glorious miracles (such as never any before nor since did nor could do, unless by his power, and in his name) proveth him to be the Messiah, the great prophet which should come into the world; but by sense they were able to prove that such and such miracles were wrought by him; and therefore it is very observable, that when John sent to Christ, to know whether he was he, or they must look for another, the answer Christ returneth is an argument drawn from sense: Luke vii. 20-22, 'Go tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached.' And, therefore, all these considerations being laid together, it remaineth as a clear truth, that Christian religion is very reasonable; and the sensible experience which the apostles, those first planters of Christianity, had concerning the things they declared and wrote, is a strong and undeniable reason why we should give credence and obedience to their writings.

To draw to an end, here is, in the last place, matter of exhortation, and that double.

1. That before we declare things or truths to others, we look that we be fully convinced of their verity ourselves. Surely if he that doth any thing which he doubteth whether it be lawful, sinneth, much more he that declareth any thing which he doubteth whether it be true; and especially doth this concern the ministers of the gospel, who being to 'speak as the oracles of God,' must speak the word of truth.

Indeed, there are two things every good minister should be careful to do, in respect of the things he declareth:

To work the goodness of them on his own affections.

To imprint the verity of them on his own understanding.

The truth is, what we take only upon hearsay, or  
\* *Falsa utique testatio si oculorum et aurium et manuum, sensus, natura mentitur.—Tertul. de Anim. cap. 17.*



is only a fiction of our own brain, and an invention of our own fancy, we can never confidently maintain, or, however, not solidly; and the true reason why so many recant, deny the truth they have declared, is (at least for the most part) because they were never thoroughly stablished in the faith, and sufficiently convinced of its verity.

2. That so far as is imitable by us, we follow these holy apostles, in hearing, seeing, looking on, and handling the word of life. It is true, we cannot now hear Christ speaking to us with his own mouth, but we may hear him speaking to us by his faithful messengers. 'We pray you in Christ's stead,' saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 20; and again, it is 'Christ that speaketh in us,' chap. xii. 5. Oh, then, let him that hath ears hear, and let us all pray for that hearing ear, whereby we may attend to what Christ's ministers speak from, as if it were spoken by him, to wit, with all humility and sincerity. Again, we cannot now see him in his person, but we may see him in his ordinances. St Paul saith, that in the gospel, Jesus

Christ is 'before our eyes, evidently set forth, crucified among us,' Gal. iii. 1; and that in the holy sacrament 'we shew forth the Lord's death till he come,' 1 Cor. xi. 16. Oh, therefore, let us in these holy ordinances see, and so see, as to look upon, and rejoice in him. Finally, we cannot handle him corporally in himself, but we may handle him sacramentally in the pledges of his love, the bread and wine; we may handle him, though not literally, yet metaphorically by faith, believing on him. Indeed, it is faith that can do all these acts, hear and see, and look on, and handle Christ; it is the Christian's ear, and eye, and hand; let us so make use of it, by faith attending to him, beholding and embracing him, till at last the time come of his second manifestation, when with these eyes, and no other, Job xix. 27, we shall see him coming in the glory of his Father, and to the endless joy of our hearts hear him pronouncing the sweet sentence, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world,' Mat. xxv. 34.

## SERMON VI.

*That which was from the beginning.*—1 JOHN I. ver. 1, part first. *That ye also may have fellowship with us.*—Ver. 3, part middle.

CHRISTIAN religion hath ever met with contradiction. It is true as St Paul saith, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 'Without controversy, it is a great mystery;' but it is as true, that because it is a great mystery, therefore it hath never been without controversy, nor hath the devil been wanting to blow this flame, raise these commotions. At the first he strove to strangle this babe in the cradle, nip this blossom in the bud, and devour Christianity in its infancy, whilst he stirred up the Jews and Pagans without, various false teachers within the church, to oppugn true religion. For this reason, no doubt, it was that this holy apostle endeavoured to confirm those to whom he wrote, in the verity of Christian faith; to which end, he beginneth this epistle with discovering both its antiquity and certainty, in these words, 'That which was from the beginning,' &c.'

The antiquity of the Gospel's origination, is that part I am next to handle, as it is expressed in the very beginning, 'That which was from the beginning.' I am not ignorant that a great part of expositors refer these words to the person of Christ, as if St John's meaning were thus to be construed, 'The Word of life which was from the beginning.' A special argument moving them to this interpretation, is the fit correspondence between the Epistle and the Gospel, which begins with those words, 'In the beginning was the Word,' and is no doubt to be understood of Christ, signifying his eternal substance. Indeed, these words,

'was from the beginning,' do very fitly and fully represent that divine truth to us. For,

1. The verb *was*, being a verb substantive, is peculiar to God,\* and so belongs to Christ as God. The being of all creatures is determined to some species, as it is an angel, or it is a man, and the like; only of God we say HE IS, without any additament, for that is the name God gave himself: Exod. iii. 14, 'I AM hath sent thee;' and Christ applieth to himself, John viii. 58, 'Before Abraham was, I am.' Indeed, the tense is very improper, since eternity admits not of *prius* or *posterius*, nor knoweth any succession; but yet, as St Austin observeth,† because of the mutability of time, in which we subsist, we best conceive of eternity by referring to those distinctions of time, past, present, to come, affirming of Christ as God, that he was, is, and shall be. Since there was no time wherein he was not, there shall be no time wherein he shall not be, and there is no time wherein he is not; in which respect he is said to be, 'yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8.

2. These words, *from the beginning*, serve yet more clearly to express the eternity of his Godhead, whether we understand by *beginning* eternity itself, or the beginning of the creation. Some construe *beginning* by

\* Verbum *is* proprie ad Deum pertinet.—*Bez.*

† Propter mutabilitatem temporum in quibus versatur nostra mortalitas, non mendaciter dicimus et fait et erit, et est, &c.—*Aug. in Joh. tr. xix.*

eternity, for though it is true eternity hath no beginning, yet inasmuch as it is no less true that there was nothing before eternity, this word beginning may though improperly be applied to it, and so was *from the beginning* it was *from eternity*.

The most, and I conceive most rationally, understand by beginning, *rerum omnium initium*, the beginning of all things, that time when all creatures began to have a being; and so this *from* is the same with the Gospel's *in*, and both as much as before the beginning.\* In this respect it is that St Austin observeth, it is not said God made him in the beginning, as it is of the heaven and the earth, and the things in both; † but he was in the beginning even then when other things began to exist, he had a personal subsistence and therefore eternal, because whatsoever was before the beginning of time must be eternal.

And if in this sense we construe these words, they are prefixed no doubt on purpose to prevent a mistake which might arise from the following words; for whereas they might have been apt, with some heretics, to think that this Word did not begin to be till he was heard, seen, and handled, he first acquaints them that he was from the beginning. Indeed, then it was he began *to be man*, but not *to be*; then he was made flesh, but he was the Word before, ‡ even from all eternity, the Word of life which was from the beginning. But when I observe the grammar of the text, I must crave leave to recede from this exposition, for it is not *ὅς*, but *ὃ*, *he* which was, or the word which was, but *that* which was from the beginning concerning the word of life; by which it appeareth that the most proper reference of these words, is not to the person of Christ, but to the doctrine which the gospel revealeth concerning him, § and this exposition no less agrees with the logic than the grammar of the text, since in this sense (as Œcumenius, Theophilact, and Athanasius have observed) the words are an answer to that objection which was made against Christian doctrine by its enemies, as if it were a new doctrine. That therefore he might take off this aspersion, which both Jews and Greeks did cast upon Christianity, he assures us that it is no novel fancy, but an ancient mystery, that which was from the beginning.

And now, according to this interpretation, we are further to inquire in what respect this is verified of Christian religion, evangelical doctrine, that it was from the beginning.

The answer to which will be despatched in three considerations, each of which exceedeth the other.

\* *Æternitas est principium sine principio.*—*Lap in loc.* Confer Mat. xix. 4, cum ver. 8. ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ποιεῖσθαι πρὸς—*Œcumen.* In principio sic dictum, ac si diceretur ante omnia.—*Aug. de Trinit.* l. vi. c. 2.

† Non sicut in principio fecit Deus cælum et terram, ita in principio fecit verbum; sed in principio erat verbum.—*Aug.* Ep. lxxvi.

‡ *Cepit esse caro ex Virgine Mariâ sed non tunc cepit esse verbum, &c.*—*Aug. in ep.*

§ *Vide Athanas. Synops. Theoph. et Œcumen. in loc.*

1. That which was from the beginning, that is, which was preached from the very first, that Christianity was published to the world. That this phrase *from the beginning* is so to be understood in some places, both of the Gospel and Epistle, is not to be denied; and Vorstius is positive that it must be so understood here;\* nor will I reject this sense, though I shall not confine the words to it. Take it then thus briefly: Soon after the gospel was preached, there arose up some who broached another gospel, and filled the church with damnable heresies. Now St John in these words acquits his doctrine from partaking with heresies, and lets them know that what he declared to them was not what some heretics had lately invented, and privily brought into the church, but what was taught by Christ to his apostles, and by them to the world from the very beginning.

2. But besides this, we may very well carry the expression a great deal further, and look backward as far as the fall of man, which was in the beginning of the world, and so 'that which was from the beginning,' that is the doctrine which, soon after the world began, was preached to man; † for indeed the promise made by God to Adam, 'the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head,' what is it but an abridgment of the gospel, an epitome of Christianity, a summary of evangelical truths? Nay, this doctrine is that which still along was *umbris prefigurata, vaticiniis predicta*, prefigured in the types, and foretold in the prophecies; upon which ground St Paul saith expressly of the gospel of God, it is 'that which he had promised afore by his prophets, in the holy Scriptures,' Rom. i. 2; and Zacharias saith, Luke i. 70, the 'raising up of Christ an horn of salvation,' is that 'he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.' The truth is, as God would never have man destitute of a way to come to him, so the way for fallen man to come to him hath been one and the same for substance in all ages of the church; and the New Testament is nothing else but the unveiling of Moses his face, a breaking of the Old Testament shell, a more clear discovery of what was, though darkly, made known from the beginning.

3. And yet, to go one step further, beyond which we cannot go, that 'which was from the beginning,' that is, before the beginning of the world, to wit, in the eternal purpose and counsel of God. Indeed, as the permission of man's fall, which was in the beginning of time, so the effecting of man's redemption, which was in the fulness of time, was foreordained by God before all time; so as the gospel is nothing else but as it were a copy of that writing which was in the mind of God from all eternity. In this respect it is that the gospel is called 'the everlasting gospel,' Rev.

\* *Videtur omnino designari tempus illud quo primum cepit evangelium predicari.*—*Vorst. in loc.*

† *A condito orbe in ecclesiâ semper prædicata, &c.*—*Zanc.*



xiv. 6, and Christ is said to be 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' chap. xiii. 8; and yet more clearly, 'this eternal life' is said to be that 'which God, which cannot lie, promised (that is, purposed) before the world began,' Titus i. 2.\*

From whence we may profitably infer a double conclusion:

True antiquity is a sure mark of verity.

That antiquity is true which is from the beginning.

1. Would ministers know what doctrine they ought to declare, and the people what they are to receive? This is a good rule: let it be that doctrine which hath been anciently embraced and maintained by the Christian church; a very seasonable item in these days, wherein, to use Vincentius Lyrinensis† his expression, *Bene fundata antiquitas scelesti novitate subruitur*, well grounded antiquity is overturned by fanatic novelty. The cry of the Egyptian priest in Plato, cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, 'O Solon, Solon, you are always children,‡ may fitly be taken up of the men of this generation; they are children pleased with every novel toy, and 'tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.' Not content with the ancient apostolical government, universally continued in the Christian church for many hundred years, we have endeavoured to erect new forms, which, Proteus-like, change into several shapes, and about which the contrivers cannot tell how to agree. Not knowing indeed, themselves, what they would have; not satisfied with, nay, much offended at, the ancient devout liturgy of our English church, which the first compilers extracted as a quintessence out of the several preceding liturgies, both of the Greek and Latin church, we have erected a new, or rather no way of worship, leaving every minister to the dangerous liberty of an extemporary devotion, and the people to the sad slavery of hearing those vain tautologies, nay, many times horrid blasphemies, which are vented in those kind of prayers. And yet once more, not willing to be regulated by those ancient doctrinal truths, which the church, from and with the holy Scriptures, hath delivered to us, how many are there amongst us who seek another gospel, vent strange opinions, the people heaping up to themselves teachers, and the teachers heaping up to themselves auditors, who have an itch after novelty, not only in discipline, but doctrine.

O my brethren, take we all heed lest we be infected with this itch, which is the sister of superstition, mother of rashness, and the daughter of inconstancy. Rather let the prophet Jeremiah his words take place with us: Jer. vi. 16, 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Let St Paul's counsel to Timothy be acceptable: 2 Tim. i. 13, 14, *serva depositum*, 'Hold

fast the form of sound words,' *non a te inventum, sed tibi creditum*, which was not invented by thee, but committed to thee;\* and according to St Jude's exhortation, Jude 2, let us 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.' Finally, let St Jerome's practice be our pattern, *Meum propositum est antiquos legere, et a fide ecclesie catholicae non recedere*, my resolve is to read the ancients, and not recede from the faith of the catholic church. Indeed, however it may now be made one of the marks of the well-affected godly party to follow new ways, yet I am sure Lyrinensis sets it down as a continued practice in the church, that the more religious any man was, the more zealous he was against factious novelties.†

2. But further, as we must assert antiquity, so that antiquity is 'what was from the beginning;' for though error may be old, yet still, that which is from the beginning is truth.‡ Indeed, as crookedness is no other but a deviation from a straight rule, so error an aberration from truth; and therefore, as a crooked line supposeth a straight, so error supposeth truth. And upon this ground it is that the father's§ rule is, *Veritate manifesta cedat consuetudo veritati*, when truth appeareth, custom must give way, because, indeed, be the custom never so ancient, truth was before it. With this it is we must justly answer the Romish plea of antiquity for many of their erroneous assertions, that though they have been some of them of many hundred years' standing, yet they were not known in the pure and primitive times of the church, and therefore, as our blessed Saviour, in the point of divorce, reduceth the Jews to this consideration, 'it was not so from the beginning,' Mat. xix. 8. True, indeed, it hath been long permitted you for the hardness of your hearts, but it was not so from the beginning. The first institution giveth no such allowance. So we, in those points of controversy between us and the church of Rome, reduce them to the beginning of Christian religion. It is true, many of their doctrines have been long published, but they were not from the beginning; they were not taught by Christ or his apostles, or their successors in the first centuries of the church. Whilst, therefore, the papists scoff at our religion as a novel faction, as those Athenians did at Paul's doctrine, we have this in readiness to retort, and are able (blessed be God) to make it good against them: Ours is no other than that which was from the beginning, and that even at Rome itself, preached and professed; nor do we differ from them, but only in those opinions which, since the golden foundation of Christianity was laid by Christ and his apostles, hath

\* Vincent. Lyr. l. d.

† Mos iste semper in ecclesia viguit, ut quo quisque foret religiosior, eo promptius novellis adinventionibus contraret. — *Vinc. Lyr. adv. hæc. cap. 9.*

‡ Quod primum, illud verum, quod posterius falsum. — *Tertul.*

§ Aug. de bapt. parvul.

\* Vide Est. ibid.

† Vincent. Lyr. adv. hæc. cap. 9, 26, 30.

‡ Cl. Al. Strom. lib. i. in fine.



been by Babel-builders superstructed, as hay and stubble, fit only to be cast into the fire.

The last branch of the gospel's commendation is from the utility of the end. Now the end which is here mentioned is double, to wit, *proximus* and *remotus*. The proxime and immediate end is *κοινωνία*, a sacred fellowship; the remote end, which is indeed the effect of the former, is *χαρά*, a spiritual joy.

The first of these is set down in these words, 'That you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;' wherein this end of the gospel, and the declarers of it, is propounded and expounded, that in the former and this in the latter clause, which is enclosed in a parenthesis.

1. The proposition is, 'That you also may have fellowship with us;' which, that we may handle in its fullest latitude, we shall consider it both absolutely as a benefit, and relatively as an end.

1. *You have fellowship with us*, is a choice benefit, and such as may be construed two ways:

That you and we may have fellowship together.

That you may have the same fellowship which we have.

Zanchy expounds it of the former,\* Gagneius of the latter,† Marlorate taketh in both.‡ So shall I, the one indeed following upon the other, since, being in fellowship with the apostles, they became partakers of the same privilege that they had, though this latter is that which I conceive the most genuine sense, and therefore I shall especially insist upon.

1. The benefit here understood may be the joining of these converted Christians into one body with the apostles, whilst they by embracing the apostles' writings, and acknowledging the truth of what they declare, became members of the church whereof the apostles were the planters.§ And surely this is no small comfort, that all believers, how different soever in offices and degrees, how distant soever in place and habitation, have yet a spiritual fellowship with one another, to wit, inasmuch as they are fellow-worshippers of the same God, Joshua xvii. 3, fellow-subjects of the same Lord, Eph. iv. 5, fellow-soldiers under one captain, Heb. ii. 10, 12, fellow-sheep in the same fold, John x. 16, fellow-servants under one master, Rev. vi. 11, fellow-brethren of the same parents, Gal. iii. 16, iv. 26, fellow-stones in the same building, 1 Peter ii. 5, fellow-members in the same body, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. And look as in corporations and societies, though the particular members are never so remote one from the other, yet inasmuch as they all belong to the same society, they are said to have fellowship each with other; so is it in the Christian church; and this relation is that which, as it carrieth in it

\* Una cum illis fieri ecclesia.—Zanch.

† Ut participes sitis sicut et nos.—Gagn.

‡ Ut societatem cum apostolis habeamus, et eorum participes simus.—Marlor.

§ Communicatione in eadem fide, religione, ecclesia.—Menocho.

dignity, it being in Theodosius his opinion, and not unjustly, a greater honour to be *membrum ecclesie* than *caput imperii*, a member of the church than head of an empire, so also manifold duties of mutual love and amity one towards another, of earnest and devout prayer one for another, of sympathy and fellow-feeling one with another, of imparting all manner of talents one to another, because they are members one of another. But,

2. The more genuine construction of this benefit is to interpret it, the entitling of them to whom he wrote to the same fellowship, to wit, of God and Christ, as it followeth in the next words, which he, with the rest of the apostles, had; as if he should say, These privileges which hitherto we enjoyed alone, we now by writing the gospel communicate to you;\* we are the first members of the church, but not the whole body, and therefore you as well as we are capable of the same benefits. And it is a tacit prevention of an objection which might be made, for whereas, when the apostle saith, 'We write the things we have seen concerning Christ,' they might say or think, What is this to us? We have not, cannot see or handle him; it is a privilege not possible for us to attain; to this these words implicitly return an answer, that by the apostles writing what they saw, they, to wit, believing the truth of what was written, might have fellowship with them. And thus it is true of all Christians, who by faith have fellowship with Christ as well as the apostles, though they never saw him, because [they have] the same interest in his person, his merits, and those good things which are purchased by him. Excellently to this purpose St Austin on this very place:† They saw and we do not, and yet we are partakers of the same benefits with them, because we believe in Christ as well as they. It is very observable in this respect that our blessed Saviour himself, as in one place, Mat. xiii. 16, he tells his disciples, 'Blessed are your eyes, for you see;' so in another place, John xx. 29, he tells them, 'Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed.' We then, who are there no doubt pointed at, are as well happy as the disciples; and as they, had they not believed in Christ, would have been miserable though they saw him, so we believing in him are blessed, though we cannot see him; yea, *eo magis beati in credendo, quo minus expediti in videndo*, the want of sight evidenceth our faith so much the more amiable.‡ Oh let us set an high estimate upon this grace of faith, which giveth us an interest in Christ as well as the apostles. It is very observable what the apostle Peter saith of those to whom he wrote, 2 Peter i. 1, that they 'had obtained

\* Quæ nos apostoli hactenus soli habuimus, enunc per evangelium etiam vobis annuntiantur et communicantur, &c.—*Fer. in loc.*

† Illi viderunt, et nos non videmus; et tamen socii sumus, quia fidem communem tenemus.—*Aug. in ep.*

‡ Magnanimum vigor est mentium credere quæ corporeo non videntur intuitu, &c.—*Leo. de ascens. Serm. I.*

the like precious faith with him,' and the rest of the apostles. Indeed, of all divine gifts, faith is not of the least price, and their faith which saw not Christ is alike precious with them that did, because it in-stateth them in the same fellowship; and therefore how should we Christians value our faith! But,

2. That you may have fellowship, argueth these words to be set down as the end which the Holy Ghost aimed at in declaring and writing to them, not only that they might know those things to be true, but that they might reap the same benefit by them which the apostles had.\* Thus, as the sun shineth, that others may partake of the same light with itself, and the fountain sends forth water, that others may participate of it, so do these apostles write, that the people might relish the same sweetness in Christ which they had tasted.

It is that which is observable in the apostles, considered under a double notion, as pastors, as Christians.

1. As pastors; we see in them what is the aim of a true minister of the gospel, not so much his own as his people's benefit.† St John doth not say, We write that we may participate with you, to wit, in your temporals, but that you may participate with us in our spirituals. True, this is the people's duty to the pastor, according to that apostolical precept, Gal. vi. 6, 'Let him that is taught communicate to him that teacheth in all good things;' but this is not that the pastor aimeth at in declaring the gospel to the people, but rather that he may be an instrument to communicate those better things to them. Indeed (as St Paul observeth, 1 Tim. vi. 5), false teachers suppose gain to be godliness, minding nothing more than their own carnal advantage; but the true apostles esteem godliness gain, and therefore chiefly aim at the people's spiritual benefit. And truly this is that which (as Calvin noteth) should be a singular means to gain your credence to our writing, our declarings. Why will you not believe our report, regard our message, when our end is only your good, that you may partake the same benefit with us?

2. As Christians; we may in them behold the frame of a truly pious heart, to desire that others may have fellowship with itself in the same spiritual enjoyments. Good Christians are no niggards of their heavenly dainties, they love not to eat their morsels alone, but invite others to the same participation; hence that wish of Moses, Num. xi. 29, 'Would all the Lord's people were prophets,' and of St Paul, Acts xxvi. 29, that all 'were as he, except his bonds.' Upon this ground it was that Philip, having found Christ, John i. 45, called Nathanael; and the woman of Samaria, chap. iv. 29, having met with the Messiah, inviteth her friends to the sight and knowledge of him. And if you desire the reason, it is plain; because,

1. The bringing others into the same fellowship with themselves is a means of enlarging the kingdom of Christ, and so of advancing the glory of God. Religion teacheth every good man to pray, 'Hallowed be thy name, and thy kingdom come;' and surely we cannot pray this cordially, if we desire not, endeavour not, that which tends to both, the winning men to the faith of Christ.

2. The gaining others to their fellowship will be the means of making them for ever happy; and therefore, as in zeal for God's glory, so in charity to the souls of their brethren, they cannot but desire it. This is the different temper of envy and charity: envy thinketh it a small matter to be happy itself, unless another may be unhappy;\* charity would not be happy alone, but striveth to draw in company. This Aretius giveth as the sense of these words here,† We love you as ourselves, and therefore wish you as well as ourselves, that you may have fellowship with us.

3. The bringing in others is no diminution to themselves; it is the manifest difference between spiritual and temporal riches: those diminish by imparting, but not these. Godly men well know that if others have more, they shall not therefore have the less; and it were strange not to wish a courtesy to another, when it may be no injury to ourselves. The music is not the less harmonious to thee because others hear it; nor doth the candle the less enlighten thee because others see by it as well as thyself; nor is our participation of heavenly things the less because others have the same fellowship with us.

To end this, let the same mind be in us that was in these holy apostles, and is in all good Christians. Indeed, it is that which in a bad way is usually the practice both of the devil and wicked men. The devil, being himself fallen, never ceased till he drew Adam into the same pit with him. Ungodly men would have all partners in the same wickedness and wretchedness with themselves; they say, 'Come with us, cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse,' Prov. i. 11, 14; and by these words they seek to entice and inveigle inconsiderate persons. For this reason it was that that epicure Heliogobalus took care for the training up of his son in the same luxuriant courses wherein himself lived. Now there is an oblique imitation, even of wicked men, which is commendable. As sin is boundless, so grace must be abounding; as sin is infectious, so grace must be communicative. Evil men decrease from bad to worse, holy men must increase from good to better; wicked men strive to make others as bad or worse than themselves, good men must endeavour to make others as holy and as happy as themselves. Thus we may learn even of the worst men; but rather let Christ's apostles be our tutors, his disciples our schoolmasters. Thus let be-

\* Non tantum ut noritis hæc esse vera; sed ut et vos non minus quam nos fructum inde participetis.—*Grot. ibid.*

† Quod apostoli predicando quæsierint.—*Fer.*

\* Parum est si tu sis felix nisi alter sit infelix.

† Vide Aret. in loc.



living masters instruct their servants, parents teach their children, friends admonish their friends, and godly ministers exhort their hearers, as here the

apostles did declare and write to the people for this very end, that they might bring them into the same blessed fellowship with themselves.

## SERMON VII.

*And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.*—1 JOHN I. Ver. 3, part last.

THE person of Christ is, of all others, the most amiable and excellent; hence the psalmist saith mystically of him, 'Thou art fairer than the children of men,' Psa. xlv. 2, as being indeed more than a mere son of man; and the spouse in the Canticles, being asked in contempt by the daughters of Jerusalem, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved?' Cant. v. 9, returneth that high yet deserved encomium, 'My beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand.'

The doctrine of Christ is that, than which none more certain and undoubted; in which respect, the main fundamental axiom of Christ's coming into the world is called by St Paul, 1 Tim. i. 15, a 'faithful saying;' and the whole gospel, by St James, chap. i. 18, 'The word of truth,' there being infallible verity and fidelity in evangelical sayings.

The sincere professors of Christ are such as none else but they can be truly happy and blessed; hence it is, that they are dignified by the apostle Peter with these honourable titles, 1 Peter i. 9, of a 'chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people.'

And now, beloved, if you look into this short exordium, you shall find each of these briefly and pithily handled. The gospel's certainty, as being most ancient and evident, is evinced in the first verse; Christ's excellency, as being the Word of life, that eternal life, is insisted on in part of the first and the second verse; finally, the felicity of a Christian, as being one that hath fellowship with God and Christ, and thereby fullness of joy, is characterised in the third and fourth verses.\* Well may this golden three invite us once and again, nay, often, to look into and peruse this choice preface, 'That which was from the beginning,' &c.

We are now come, according to our proposed method, to the last branch of the second general, the commendation of the gospel, from the utility of its end; and having made entrance upon the first end, as it is propounded in those words, 'that you also may have fellowship with us,' we are now to handle the exposition of it in the following, 'and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.'

Which words are a plain assertion, unfolding the

\* In exordio hujus Epistolæ Joannes tria hæc nobis inculcare voluit; quod nihil majus aut excellentius personâ Christi, nihil certius quam evangelium nostrum, nihil denique beatus Christiano homine.—*Fer. in loc.*

dignity and excellency of that fellowship\* which the apostles and all believers with them have, inasmuch as it is a fellowship with the Father and his Son. It is that which our translators set down with an asseveration, *truly*; conceiving this to be the emphasis of the pleonasm, *καὶ δὲ*, which is in the Greek.

The Greek word which is here rendered *fellowship*, admits both in sacred and profane writs of a double construction, as signifying either *communio* or *communicatio*, communion and fellowship, or communication and partnership; and though in some places only one of those can well be admitted, yet here I conceive both may very well consist; and the apostle may be probably thought to intend that intimate communion which believers have with, and by virtue hereof, the liberal communication they receive from, the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

To unlock this cabinet, and shew you the rich pearl contained in it, give me leave to consider it both generally and particularly: in general, what maketh up this *κοινωνία*, fellowship here mentioned; and in particular, as this fellowship is expressed to be with two of the persons in the sacred Trinity, the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

1. The substance of the benefit will be discovered in the general discussion; and that you may the more distinctly understand it, proceed with me by these four steps, which are as so many degrees of this fellowship, namely, amicable reconciliation, effectual regeneration, comfortable association, and complete glorification.

(1.) The rise and inchoation of this fellowship is reconciliation, whereby God of an enemy becomes a friend, and receiveth us into favour. To this purpose is Ferus his paraphrase: † To have fellowship (saith he) is to be in covenant with God, to be one of the number of those to whom he vouchsafeth his special love. Accordingly, this phrase may be interpreted by that of St Paul, Rom. v. 1, where he saith, 'We have peace with God, and he hath made us accepted.' The truth is, we all by nature are not only strangers, but enemies, Eph. i. 6; and where there is hostility, there can be no society, so that we begin not to have fellowship with, till we are reconciled to, God. This reconciliation of God to penitent believing sinners, is most ele-

\* Explicat quam nobilis sit ecclesiæ societas.—*Zanch.*

† Ipsius gratiam et favorem habere, et amicitiam dignum reputari, et in fœdero esse.—*Fer. in loc.*



gantly and sweetly shadowed forth under the father's gracious behaviour towards the returning prodigal, Luke xv. 20. No sooner doth his son set foot forward to come home, but his father 'saw him;' there were eyes of love; 'had compassion on him;' there were bowels of love; and 'ran to him' with feet of love, and 'fell on his neck;' there were arms of love; and 'kissed him' with lips of love; by all which expressions, we may gather what a tender dear affection of amity there is in God towards penitents, which is the foundation of this fellowship.

(2.) The concomitant of this reconciliation is regeneration, since whosoever is accepted by God hath stamped upon him the image of God, and so doth after a sort partake with God.

To clear this, you must know that there can be no fellowship where there is not some similitude; in which respect, saith one upon my text, This fellowship with God is by likeness to him;\* for this reason at first it was that almighty God, intending man a creature to have fellowship with himself, made him after his own image; nor can we be admitted into this fellowship unless this image be renewed in, and restored to us. Now, this image of God is nothing else but the communication of such qualities as resemble those, which, for this very reason, the schools call the communicable attributes of God. Such are his holiness, goodness, mercy, justice, truth, and the like; and because holiness is the chief, yea, after a sort comprehensive of the rest, therefore, especially in this, is the image of God placed. And so this fellowship with God is a participation with him in purity and sanctity, and may therefore fitly be explained by St Peter's *Θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως*, 2 Peter i. 4, 'partaking of the divine nature;' or St Paul's *μεταλαβῆν τῆς ἁγιότητος αὐτοῦ*, Heb. xii. 10, 'partaking of his holiness.'

(3.) The progress of this fellowship is in that sweet communion which believers (being thus reconciled and regenerated) have with God, so that there is, though not an equality (far be it from us to make such a blasphemous construction of this phrase), yet a near and intimate familiarity,† in which respect God and a Christian may be said to walk, to talk, to feast, nay, to lodge and dwell together. Believers walk with God in a holy subjection, God walketh with believers in affording them gratuitous protection; believers speak to God in devout supplications, God speaketh to believers in spiritual consolations; believers feast God with their graces, God feasteth believers with his joys; finally, believers inhabit in the secret of the Most High, and God repositeth himself in the bosom of believers. Hence occur those phrases of God's being with us, and our walking with God; of our having access to God, and his coming down to us; of our supping with him, and his supping with us; of our dwelling in God, and God in us, Eph. iii. 12, Rev. iii. 20, 1 John iv. 15, we

\* Fit hæc societas cum Deo per similitudinem.—*Serrar.*

† Associatio cum Deo.—*Trin.*

being (to speak it with holy reverence) as it were *conviva*, his fellow-commoners; *conviatores*, fellow-travellers; yea, *contubernales*, chamber-fellows. Add to this,

(4.) The consummation of this fellowship is in the other world, where there shall be a full communication of the image of God to us, whereby we shall partake of purity, life, and immortality, of unspotted holiness and indeficient happiness, when we shall have the clear vision of God face to face, and by virtue of that, a full fruition of him, so far as a created nature is capable of; and all this without the least interruption, intermission, cessation. This fellowship is that which for the present we have, though not *re*, in actual possession, yet *spe*, in certain expectation; that participation and communion which we have here by grace, being an earnest and pledge, assuring us of that we shall have hereafter by glory. And this shall suffice to be spoken in general of the nature of this fellowship.

2. The further amplification of this fellowship is in that here are two persons specified; and though it be one and the same fellowship which we have with all the persons, yet inasmuch as two of them are severally mentioned, it may well admit of a distinct consideration.

1. This fellowship is said to be 'with the Father.' It is very observable to the understanding of this, that the Father, being the first person in the Deity, is the primary original and fountain of all communication to the creature; whence it is, that those acts which the Deity is pleased to exercise towards the creature are, though not exclusively, yet for the most part expressly assigned in Scripture to the Father. Thus the Father is said to come and dwell with us, John xiv. 23. The Father is he that hath 'begotten us again to a lively hope,' 1 Peter i. 3; finally, the Father is said to 'bless us with all spiritual blessings,' Eph. i. 3. No wonder if this fellowship is here said to be with the Father. The nearness of this fellowship which we have with the Father is represented by a gradation of allusions in Scripture, all which do excellently illustrate this truth.\* There is some kind of participation that a servant hath with his master, yet greater is that which one friend hath with another, yet greatest is that which a son hath with his father. In all these relations we stand to the Father; we his servants, and he our Lord; nay, not only servants, but friends, and therefore we read not only of Moses the servant, Num. xii. 7, but Abraham the friend of God, James ii. 23; nay, we are adopted to be sons, and therefore it is no presumption to say our fellowship is with *the*, because *our*, Father.

2. This fellowship is said to be 'with his Son Jesus Christ,' which may very well admit of a double construction: either

Our fellowship is not only with the Father, but his Son; or

\* Est societas domini cum servis, patris cum filiis, &c.—*Serrar.*

Our fellowship with the Father is by and through that fellowship which we have with the Son.

1. Our fellowship which we have with the Father is also with his Son Jesus Christ.

There is a generation of men indeed in the Romish church who challenge this as their peculiar, to be *é societate Jesu*, Jesuits, Jebusites rather, such who, whilst they pretend to be of the society of Jesus, are in truth limbs of antichrist; and one day this Jesus will give them little thanks for this arrogant assumption of his name, whilst they stand in opposition to his truth. As for the real privilege of having society with Christ Jesus, it is not to be appropriated to any order of men, but is justly applicable to every Christian. This fellowship which we have with Christ is set forth in various similitudes, such as are these, of the head and the members, root and branches, foundation and building, husband and wife; and look what participation the members have with the head, receiving sense and motion from it; the branches with the root, which communicates to them sap and juice; the building with the foundation, by which it is sustained and upheld; finally, the wife with the husband, having an interest in his person, goods, whatever he is and hath; the same hath every Christian with Christ, who communicateth himself with all his merits and benefits unto him. Indeed, as the apostle tells us, Col. ii. 16, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;' and this not for himself, but us, that we, as the evangelist speaketh, John i. 16, might 'of his fulness receive grace for grace.'

If you would yet have a more distinct explanation of this fellowship, consider it in reference to each of these titles which are here used, we having fellowship with him as God's Son, as our Jesus, and as Christ.

1. We have fellowship with him as he is *God's Son*, inasmuch as we participate of his sonship and inheritance. Christ, though the only begotten, yet maketh us the adopted sons of God; and therefore our apostle saith in his Gospel, John i. 12, 'To as many as receive him, he giveth this power, to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.' In this respect, Christ tells his disciples, 'I go to my Father, and your Father.' Indeed, he saith not *our* Father, because Christ's filiation is of another kind than ours,\* but 'mine and yours;' not only mine, but yours. Christ communicates to all believers by grace, that which himself had by nature; and as thus we have fellowship with him in the sonship, so likewise in the inheritance. As the inheritance is Christ's by natural right, so he conveyeth it to us by deed of gift;† and therefore the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 17, that, 'being children, we are heirs; heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ.'

\* Non ait patrem nostrum, aliter ergo meum, aliter vestrum, naturâ meum, gratiâ vestrum.—*Aug. ibid.*

† Quicquid habet Christus, habent illi qui cum eo sunt in societate, donatio jure.—*Naorg. in loc.*

2. We have fellowship with him as *Jesus*, inasmuch as it is to believers that he becometh effectually a *Jesus*, according to that expression of the angel (when he gave this name to him), 'For he shall save his people from their sins.' Indeed, we are sick of sin, and Jesus is our physician; we are captives to Satan, and Jesus is our redeemer; we are at enmity with God, and Jesus is our peace-maker; we are in danger, and Jesus is our deliverer; finally, we are indebted, and Jesus is our surety. Now as the patient partaketh of health by his physician, the captive of liberty by his redeemer, enemies are reconciled by their peace-maker, the afflicted saved by their deliverer, and the debtor is acquitted by his surety, so have we by this Jesus a participation of pardon, peace, liberty, and salvation.

3. We have fellowship with him as *Christ*, and that whether you look upon the mediatorial offices he was pleased to undertake, or the mediatorial acts he performed.

(1.) *Christ* signifieth as much as *anointed*; and we have an unction too. He was indeed 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,' Ps. xlv. 8, but yet so as that we are fellow-partakers with him of this ointment; in which respect St Jerome\* well observeth, that the very name of this unction is communicated to us, who from Christ are called *Christians*. Yet more distinctly, there is a threefold office to which Christ was anointed, in each of which we have fellowship with him, namely, prophetic, sacerdotal, and regal. St Paul saith concerning Christ Jesus, that he 'of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. As he is a prophet, he is made to us wisdom, enlightening and informing our ignorance; as priest, he is made to us righteousness, absolving us from the guilt of our sin, whereby our persons are justified and services accepted; as king, he is made to us sanctification, enabling us to mortify our lusts and to live holily. Thus he becometh a Christ; and being a Christ, he is a Jesus also, and thereby redemption to us. In respect of this participation with Christ in his offices, it is that we are not only in general called Christians, but in particular said to be 'kings and priests to God the Father,' Rev. i. 5, and that of his making; and the Christian church is called 'a royal priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable by Jesus Christ,' 1 Peter ii. 5.

(2.) This Jesus being thus anointed for the accomplishing of our salvation, and the completion of his offices, performed many acts. He was born, crucified, dead, buried, he rose again, and ascended into heaven, and in all these we have fellowship with him: with his birth in our new birth and regeneration, with his cross in our sufferings, with his death in the mortification of our lusts, with his burial in the progress of that work, with his resurrection in our newness of life,

\* Hier. ep. 140.



and with his ascension in our heavenly conversation. This is that which the apostle Paul often intimateth in those phrases: we are buried with him, *συνετάφημεν*; we are planted into the likeness of his death, *σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν*; our old man is crucified with him, *συνεσταυρώθη*; and, you are risen together with Christ, *συνηγέρθητε*, Rom. vi. 4-6, Col. iii. 1; yea, yet more suitably in those expressions, the virtue of his resurrection, and the fellowship (the same word with this in my text) of his sufferings, *τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῶν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ*, Philip. iii. 10: this being that which every Christian, more or less, experimentally knoweth, and wherein he hath a conformity to, and so a fellowship with, Christ.

2. But this is not all that the apostle here insinuateth. Those words, 'and with his Son Jesus Christ,' being not only a further enlargement of this participation, in that it is, as with the Father, so with the Son, but likewise a discovery of the means whereby we come to have this fellowship with the Father, and that is, by having fellowship with the Son, according to which notion we may fitly conceive the Father to be the *terminus*, and the Son the *medium* of this *societas*. The Father is he *with* whom, and the Son is he *by* and *through* whom, we have this fellowship with the Father; and therefore it is elsewhere said, he hath 'made us accepted in his Beloved,' Eph. i. 6, ii. 13; and 'we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,' Rom. v. 1; and God 'was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,' 1 Cor. v. 19. And to name no more, they 'who were afar off' are made nigh by the blood of Christ, that amity and communion which we have with God being only in and through a mediator, Jesus Christ.

The heathens were in part sensible of this truth, who, conceiving that the supreme gods were defiled by the unhallowed approaches of mortals, invented heroes and half-gods, a kind of middle powers, to be as mediators between those gods and them.\* But this doctrine of a mediator the gospel fully revealeth, and this to be no other than Jesus Christ, by whom we are brought to communion with God. Indeed, there was a time (to wit, in innocency) when man stood not in need of a mediator, but enjoyed a fellowship of perfect amity with his Creator; but now man being fallen from that integrity, and thereby having lost the favour of God, there is no other way of reconciliation but by Christ. So that, as Themistocles, when Admetus was incensed against him, brought the king's son in his arms and implored his favour, so we can by no means obtain a fellowship of reconciliation with the Father but by his Son Jesus Christ. In this respect it is that Christ saith concerning himself, John xiv. 6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.' And upon this ground he is not unfitly resembled to that ladder in Jacob's vision, which reached from earth to heaven, Gen.

\* *διὰ δαιμονίων πᾶσα ἐμιλία μετὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπου.*—Plut.

xxviii. 12, by whom alone we climb to heaven; so that if we will *pervenire ad Deum*, we must *ascendere per hominem*, to come to God, we must ascend by the man, even the man Christ Jesus.\*

There is only one thing further to be inquired for the full explication of this clause, and that is, why the apostle having mentioned two, doth not annex the third person, *and with the Holy Ghost*? In answer to which, you must know, that the third person, though he be not expressly mentioned, is necessarily implied, for the truth is, we can neither have fellowship with the Father, nor with the Son, but by the Holy Ghost. By the Spirit it is that God begets us again unto himself, and therefore it is called the 'renewing of the Holy Ghost,' Titus iii. 5; by the Spirit it is that we parteciate of God's holiness, and therefore he is called the Spirit of holiness, Rom. i. 4, not only because he is so in himself, but it is he that communicateth it unto us; finally, by the Spirit it is that the Father and the Son dwell in us, and have communion with us; in which respect our apostle saith, 1 John iii. 24, 'We know he abideth in us, by the Spirit he hath given us;' and therefore it is that we find this elsewhere directly expressed concerning the Holy Ghost, to wit, in that solemn benediction, to the 'grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father,' is joined the 'communion or fellowship of the Holy Ghost.' Though then he is not here named, we are not therefore to imagine he is excluded. Indeed it is a rule in divinity, which St Ambrose hath observed to my hand,† *Qui unum dixerit, Trinitatem signavit*, when any one of the persons is nominated in any external operation, all the rest are implied; and therefore as when we find only mention of the 'fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. i. 8, we must take in the Father and the Spirit; and when we read only of the 'fellowship of the Spirit,' Philip. ii. 1, we must conceive it as well of the Father and the Son; so when here we find the Father and the Son expressed, we must not exclude the Holy Spirit. And look as our blessed Saviour, when he speaketh of that knowledge which is the way to eternal life, John xvii. 3, though he only mention the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, is to be understood as including the Holy Ghost, so are we here to interpret St John, and therefore may very well add by way of explication, 'our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit.' Nor yet doth there want a reason (as Justinian‡ hath well observed) why the apostle maketh no express mention of the Holy Ghost, as he doth of the Son of God, namely, because, as for the communion of the Holy Ghost, they to whom he wrote could not be

\* *Scala paradisi fracta in Adamo reparata est in Christo.*—Bonav. *Factis ad offensum scala beata patrem.*—Ger. in *Genes.*

† Ambros de Sp. S. l. i. c. iii.

‡ Vide Justinian. in Ep. Cath.



ignorant of it, as having no doubt had experience themselves of the effusion of his gifts upon them, and therefore it needed not to name him; but because the divinity of the Son of God was oppugned by the heretics of those times, therefore he thought it fit with the Father to mention the Son. And thus much, or rather thus little, of this unconceivable, much more unspeakable, benefit, the fellowship which believers have with the ever blessed and glorious Trinity. What now remaineth, but that I bring it home by some comfortable application to ourselves. There are only three inferences which are plainly deducible from hence for our practice.

1. Whatever men do either for or against any Christian, reflects on God and Christ, with whom they have fellowship. Christ shall say to those at the last day who relieve his members now, Mat. xxv. 40, 'Inasmuch as you did it unto them, you did it unto me;' and it was his saying to Saul in the vision, when he breathed forth threatenings against the church, Acts ix. 5, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' And why this, but because of the fellowship which is between Christ and his members. Take then heed, O ye sons of Belial, how you scoffingly deride at, proudly insult over, and maliciously persecute, the servants of God,\* and members of Christ. Haman, notwithstanding all his greatness, durst not but honour Mordecai, Esther vi. 11, because he was 'the man whom the king delighted to honour;' and dare you abuse such whom God vouchsafeth to honour? Know you not that they are his jewels, Mal. iii. 17, and will you deface them? the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8, and will you touch them? his temple, 1 Cor. iii. 16, and will you seek to destroy them? Are they not (to speak it with an humble modesty) all in all with God, his bosom friends, his daily associates; and dare man, 'whose breath is in his nostrils,' do any injury to them; or can he do it, and hope impunity? Let none deceive themselves, *Qui insurgit in Christum Domini, insurgit in Dominum Christi*, he that riseth up against the Lord's anointed, riseth up against the Lord, by whom he is anointed; and he that offereth any indignity unto them that have fellowship with the Father and his Son, offereth it to the Father and the Son, with whom these have fellowship, and therefore must in due time expect the sure vengeance of the Almighty upon so great impiety.

2. Great is the dignity of believers, who have fellowship, not with kings, the best of men; not with angels, the best of creatures; but with God himself, the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; and therefore let them not debase this dignity, dishonour this fellowship, by conversing too much with creature comforts. When Augustus the Roman emperor saw Saracen ambassadors sporting with dogs, he asketh them if there were no women in their countries. When wicked men see

\* Non tam vos quam Christum in vobis persequuntur. — *Salv. de provid. lib. viii. c. iv.*

believers swallowed up of earthly contentments, will they not question whether there be any such divine fellowship as is pretended. Since, then, we have a fountain of living waters, why do we dig to ourselves broken cisterns? and if we have fellowship with God, let us scorn to be familiar with the world; rather let us say with David, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire in comparison of thee,' O blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to converse with!

3. How amiable and desirable must this fellowship needs be, which is with the Father and his Son, and therefore to be earnestly endeavoured after! For this it was Christ prayed in the behalf of his church, John xvii. 21; and not only of them, but 'all that should believe in his name,' 'that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us.' And surely this we both may and ought to pray for in our own behalf; *ἵνα ἔχητε*, that you may have, was St John's desire for these to whom he wrote; and it ought much more to be our desire and endeavour for ourselves that we may have, and if we have attained any degree already, that we may have yet greater measure of this fellowship. This is the note of Lapede upon the text, 'that you may have,' that is, 'that you may continue to have,'\* and have more fully this communion, because he writeth to believers in whom this was already begun; indeed, this participation being qualitative, doth, *suscipere magis et minus*, admit of degrees. All have fellowship with God and Christ as well as the apostles, but not in the same degree. Christ tells the Jews, John x. 10, 'I come that they may have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' So doth St John write to these, that they might have fellowship, and have it more abundantly, in the same fulness that the apostles had. If then as yet thou art a stranger, now labour to acquaint thyself with God and be at peace; and if thy acquaintance be begun, endeavour that it may grow to an endeared intimacy; indeed, who would not hunger and thirst after, who can be sufficiently satisfied with, this fellowship?

Fellowship in itself is a thing very delectable. The wise man much enlargeth in the commendation of it when he saith, Eccles. iv. 9-11, 'Two is better than one,' and pronounceth a *re soli*, 'Woe to him that is alone.' Indeed, as the Greek proverb runs, *εἰς ἀνὴρ οὐδεις ἀνὴρ*, one man is no man; and as Euripides,† one hand can make but a weak defence. In all undertakings, society is helpful. Fellowship is amiable to all creatures (even the dove will mourn when she hath lost her mate), but especially to man, who is therefore called by the philosopher *ζῷον πολιτικόν*, a creature born for society. Indeed, for this reason

\* *Habentis, i. e. habere pergatis et in eâ proficiatis; loquitur enim fidelibus qui jam habebant hanc societatem.*—*Lapede in loc.*

† *Μίας γὰρ χεῖρος ἀσθενὴς μάχῃ.*—*Eurip.*

banishment is accounted next to death, because it depriveth of civil society. It is observable how sadly this hath been bemoaned, not only by a Cain, Gen. iv. 14, 'Thou hast this day driven me out from the face of the earth,' but by a Job, chap. xxx. 29, 'I am a companion to owls, and a brother to dragons;' and by a David, Ps. cii. 6, 7, 'I am as a pelican in the wilderness, and an owl in the desert; I am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.'

And if fellowship be so lovely to all men, how much more religions fellowship to good men! If fellowship with men be delightful, how much more this fellowship with God himself, the Father, and the Son!

This, this, beloved, is the only good fellowship. There is indeed a fellowship called by that name which is the cover of many enormities, the devourer of large patrimonies, the bane of many hopeful wits, and yet is the darling of a great number in the world; I mean the riotous fellowship of luxurious companions. But alas, how unlike are the thing and the name! how catachrestical an expression is it when drunkenness is styled good fellowship! Oh turn in hither and behold that which truly deserveth this name, this fellowship with God and Christ, in which there is all good of honesty, utility, and of jocundity; a fellowship in which all safety, liberty, pleasure, and contentment is to be

found! No wonder if the psalmist saith, 'Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: he shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple,' Ps. lxxv. 4. This is that fellowship to which God calleth us in his gospel, and of which by faith in the gospel we participate. Indeed, as Beza\* well observeth upon the text, This is the very scope of the gospel, to make God and us at one; and as Naogorgeus† appositely, Faith is the key which opens the door, and admits us into the presence-chamber of the King of glory. Oh therefore let us cordially embrace the gospel, and daily strengthen our faith in it, so as we may have, and that every day, more and more of this heavenly fellowship, till at last we come to heaven, where, our faith being turned into sight, we shall have the greatest reason to say, in the language of the apostle, 'Truly our fellowship is' now not only with saints and angels, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, but 'with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.'

\* Scopus evangelii ut omnes una conjuncti in Christo, per fidem filii Dei simus.—*Bez.*

† Fides clavis est et aditum præbet ad hanc communionem.—*Naogorg.*

### SERMON VIII.

*And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*—1 JOHN I. 4, part last.

I AM now come by divine assistance to the end of the beginning, the conclusion of the exordium of this epistle, namely, the last clause of the fourth verse: a close full of sweetness, the subject whereof is that sweet monosyllable *joy*, the sound of which cannot but charm our ears and ravish our hearts. Indeed, the thing which this word expresseth is the wheel upon which all men's projects and motions turn, the mark at which all their designs and endeavours aim. Those various designs of men in getting wealth, grasping honour, purchasing lands, building houses, planting vineyards, do all meet in this one centre of joy and contentment. The truth is, this is that prize for which all run, and yet to which few attain, because they miss the way that leadeth to it. Would you, then, beloved, enjoy that joy you so earnestly desire, and partake of the content you so industriously strive for? Turn in hither, follow the apostle's dictates who wrote this epistle, that it may be subservient to this very end; for so he telleth us himself, 'These things we write, that your joy may be full.'

I find in the Greek copies a double reading of the pronoun in this clause; whilst in some it is *ὑμῶν*, in others *ἡμῶν*; in those, a pronoun of the second person, referring to them to whom the apostles wrote, to which accords our translation, *your joy*; in these, a pronoun

of the first person, respecting the apostles who did write, and so may be rendered *our joy*. Both of these constructions are both agreeable to the analogy of faith, and suitable to the scope of the apostle, and therefore I shall omit neither.

1. The most and the best copies read it *your*, and therefore on this I shall chiefly insist; but before I enter upon the sense of this clause, it would not be passed by that the phrase is such as our blessed Lord himself was pleased to use once and again. If you cast your eyes upon that large and excellent valedictory sermon of Christ to his disciples, in the Gospel of St John, you shall find this expression twice mentioned, John xv. 11, 'These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy might be full;' and again, chap. xvi. 24, 'Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.' And now, as scholars use to imitate their master's language, and one friend affecteth those forms of speech which the other is frequent in, so doth this beloved disciple.\* In that style in which Christ spake to his disciples, he speaketh to his children; indeed, it is not only observable in this, but those other phrases of *keeping Christ's commandments, of loving one another, of abid-*

\* Imbibisse mihi videtur plerasque formulas Johannes quibus utebatur Christus.—*Lorin.*



ing in Christ, and the like, which, as you find them to be Christ's in the Gospel, so here they are used by St John in the Epistle. Thus lying in his master's bosom, he sucked in, as it were, the phrases which dropped from his lips, and here mellifluously poureth them out.

To let go the phrase, that we may take in the sense and scope of the words; be pleased to look upon them in a double reference, either to the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth verse.

1. Refer this clause to the end of the former verse, and then the choice truth here insinuated is, that by fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, believers have fulness of joy; or if you please, take it thus, the joy which believers have in fellowship with God and Christ is a full joy. For the better explication of which assertion, I shall demonstrate it to be true in a double notion, to wit, *de presenti, et de futuro*, both here and hereafter; for of both I find expositors interpreting these words.

1. The joy which believers have for the present in this fellowship is a full joy: the truth of which will the better appear, if we consider it not only positively, but oppositively; assertively, but exclusively; it being true of this joy, and no other, that it is a full joy. Whatever we have in fellowship with the creature, is a false, a vain, an empty joy, a shadow; nay, to use the Greek poet's phrase, a dream of a shadow. Real, substantial, solid, full joy, is only to be found in fellowship with God in Christ.\* More particularly to illustrate this truth, be pleased to know that this joy, and this alone, is a full joy in respect of its adjuncts, effects, objects.

1. There are two adjuncts peculiar to this joy which demonstrate its fulness, to wit, the sincerity and the permanency of it.

This joy is a *sincere*, cordial joy. A full shower of rain is that which doth not only wet the surface, but sink into the ground, bedew the branches, but go down to the root. That is a full joy which doth not only fill the face with laughter, but the heart with comfort; † and such, yea, such alone is joy. *Cetera hilaritates non implent pectus sed frontem remittunt*, saith Seneca; ‡ worldly joys smooth the countenance, but have no influence upon the soul; nay, many times, to use Guadulupensis§ his comparison, as sweet juicy plums have stones with a bitter kernel within them, so to give the reddition in Solomon's words, Prov. xiv. 13, 'even in laughter the heart is sorrowful.' Wicked and worldly men, for the most part, do but counterfeit a mirth, like a commander in a desperate battle (to borrow Seneca|| his similitude), who, lest his soldiers should run away, sets a good face on it, speaks cheerfully, whilst yet his heart aches; but this joy is such,

that it doth not only with oil cause the face to shine, but with wine make the heart glad, Ps. civ. 15. The blessed virgin's expression is, Luke i. 14, 'My spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour;' and David saith, Ps. iv. 6, 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart.' Indeed,

Hilaris cum pondere virtus.

The joy of religion is not a light joy, which only swimmeth at the top, but weighty, and sinks down to the bottom of the heart, so as it exhilarateth the inmost parts. It maketh the mind like the upper region of the air, without any clouds of sorrow; or if you will, like heaven itself, where there is nothing but light of joy; in a word, this spiritual fellowship maketh the heart merry, which, as the wise man saith, Prov. xv. 13, is a 'continual feast.'

This joy is a *permanent*, lasting joy. That is most truly said to be full, which doth not fail; and such only is this divine joy. Other joys are such as, before they come, we make great account of; but when they are come, we cannot keep,\* nay, we quickly grow weary of, and as the flower often sheds before the leaf fade, so the joy vanisheth, whilst yet the thing remaineth. In this respect we may say of worldly joy, it is satiating, but not satisfying; glutting, and yet not filling; like some meats which nauseate the stomach, and do not fill the belly; but Christian joy is that which we can never have enough of. Of this society, and the joy in it, there is no satiety; and though it be a full joy, yet we are never so full of it here, but we desire more, whilst both the desire obtaineth fruition, and the fruition increaseth the desire.† Indeed, this water quenbeth our thirst as to anything else, all other joys seeming vain, worthless to him that hath this; but in respect of itself, it is still kindling new flames of love. Excellently hath St Gregory‡ to this purpose observed the difference between corporal and spiritual delights: those, when we want them, are coveted, when we have them, are loathed; those§ are only loathed by those who want them, but still coveted by those who taste them.

Besides, other joys are such as many times end in sorrow. How oft have you seen tears in men's eyes, after the heartiest laughter! Nothing more usual than for the sun of carnal mirth to set in a cloud, and this serpent of sensual delight hath always a sting in its tail. That verse,

Væ tibi ridenti, quia mox post gaudia flebis,

they say, hath all the parts of speech in it.|| Sure I am, it compriseth in it the state of all voluptuous epicures, who, sowing in joy, reap in tears, and after all their good cheer, are sure to meet with a sad reck-

\* *Lætitia sæculi cum magnâ expectatione speratur ut veniat, et non potest teneri cum venit.*—*Aug. tract. 7 in Joh.*

† *Quæ major voluptas quam fastidium ipsius voluptatis.*—*Tertul. de spectac. c. 29.*

‡ *Vide Gregor. Hom. 36 in Evang. Et Grcg. Nyss. orat. de Mort.*

§ *Qu. 'these'?*—*Ed.*

|| *Vide Goelen. de Risu.*

\* *Si gaudeam de rebus sæculi, &c.*—*Vide Orig. Hom. 11 in Num.*

† *Plenum gaudium ejus interiora sunt pacata.*—*Naogorg.*

‡ *Sen. ep. 23.*

§ *Guadulup in Luc.*

|| *Sen. de consol. ad polyb. c. 24.*



oning. Indeed, carnal delights at first glitter like gold, but at last prove heavy as lead; and as one saith aptly, they are wine in the morning, beer at noon, but they are vinegar at night; but this joy is a remaining, abounding joy, whereof no man had or shall have cause to repent. Carnal joy, like a standing pool, quickly drieth up, and leaveth nothing but the mud of discontent; whereas Christian joy is like a fountain of water, ever running. That (to take up St Bernard's\* metaphor), is like a candle, which goeth out in a snuff, a stink, a smoke; this, like the morning light, shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day; finally, that, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, soon vanisheth, and leaveth nothing but the ashes of sorrow behind it, whereas this, like the fire under the altar, never goeth out.

2. Not only the adjuncts, but the effects commend this joy, it being deservedly called a full, because a strong joy, able to sustain the spirit under, and bear it up against affliction. It is the apostle's epithet, Heb. vi. 18, 'strong consolation;' and it is Nehemiah's assertion, Neh. viii. 10, 'the joy of the Lord is your strength.' When any wind ariseth, it bloweth out, when any damp is cast forth, it puts out the candle of worldly joy; but this joy, like a torch, burneth clearest in the dark night of trouble; and which plainly bespeaketh its fulness, it is of manifold use, nay, indeed, of universal concernment in all calamities. In which respect the Greek father† affirmeth of him that is in communion with God, he is *ἡλαρος ἐν πᾶσι*, merry in all conditions. Other joys at best carry in them only a partial emolument, and therefore it is the joy of wealth is no antidote against sickness; nor can the joy of health cure the sorrow of poverty; but this joy is *πᾶν φάρμακον*, the universal medicine, the catholic remedy against all sorts of miseries. It maketh a prison sweet, and pain easy; it maketh a man cheerful in want, and comfortable in losses; it turneth a wilderness into a garden, teacheth to sing in a cage, and accounts solitary exile a courtesy; finally, it supports in life, yea, and it comforts in death. Thus, like the tree cast into the waters of Marah, it sweetens all calamities to us; and as outward afflictions are mitigated, so inward troubles are removed by this joy. Those wounds of conscience, which carnal mirth can only skin over, this cureth; and therefore, whereas, after sensual jollity, those wounds fester the more, by this joy the very rotten core is eaten out, and we enjoy a spiritual sanity of mind and conscience. The sum is, let conscience accuse, let the world persecute, let the devil tempt, yea, let afflictions of all sorts (like the waves of the sea) successively, nay, simultaneously beat against the ship of the soul, this joy, like a firm anchor, will be able to stay it.

3. Lastly, the fulness of this joy chiefly depends on the ground and object whereabout it is conversant.

\* Vide Bern. serm. de fallac. præsent. Vite. Et Bas. hom. de Deo gratiis semper agendis. † Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 7.

It is an undoubted maxim, that the object of all joy is good, and therefore such as is the good, such is the joy. If the good be only so in appearance, the joy must needs be false and empty; but if it be a real, full good, the joy must needs be both true and full. Now, as for worldly joy, it is only in vain, empty things. Solomon hath long since passed that censure upon these terrene comforts, Eccles. i. 2, 'All is vanity,' and therefore the joy must needs be *gaudium vanitatis*, a vain joy; whereas this joy is fixed on God our creator, Christ our redeemer,\* and so is *gaudium veritatis*, a true and solid joy. The one is a joy in corn and wine, as David distinguisheth it; but the other in the light of God's countenance, Ps. iv. 6; the one in broken cisterns, that hold no water, but the other in the fountain of living waters. And indeed, hence it is that the fulness of this joy, in those fore-mentioned respects, ariseth; therefore doth this joy fill the heart, because it is in God and Christ, who is a proportionable good to the heart; therefore is this joy such as no man can take from us, because it is in God and Christ, of whose fellowship none can debar us; therefore is this joy able to support us under all troubles, because it is in God and Christ, who is an universal and all-sufficient good. Alas, other joys being only in outward perishing things, and such as at best can afford but some particular advantage, must needs be defective, only God and Christ is such a good as is of a spiritual nature, everlasting duration, and general extent. No wonder if this fellowship alone content the mind, and the soul find that in this which may answer all its wants, and satisfy all its desires. Excellently therefore St Bernard,† What needest thou seek beside him? What can please without him? What dost thou desire, which thou mayest not find in him? He made all, he hath all, he is all. Whatsoever good thou wishest, sweet thou cravest, delectable thing thou searchest after, it is all to be found and enjoyed in him, and that by communion with him. Good reason hath St John to wish, that his brethren to whom he wrote might have this fellowship, even upon this account, that their joy might be full.

2. Though this joy we have for the present be, as you have heard, a full joy, in opposition to carnal and worldly joy, yet in comparison of that celestial joy it is but empty, and rather filling than full; and therefore some conceive joy here to be, by a metonymy of the effect for the cause,‡ put for blessedness, because then alone it is that we shall have full and perfect joy.§ And to this purpose some (as the philosopher

\* Aug. serm. 37 de verbis Dom.

† Quid queris extra illum? quid desideras præter illum? quid placet cum illo?—Bern. serm. de mis. hum. Quisquis verò percipit quid valeat illa cum Deo societas hæc unâ abundè contentus.—Calv. in loc.

‡ Posito effectu pro causâ significat ipsam beatitudinem.—Illyr. in loc.

§ Per nomen gaudii pleni significat id quod in re atque patriâ perficitur.—Lorin. ibid.

observes), derive *μακάριος* from *μάλιστα χαίρειν*, only changing the  $\alpha$  into  $\chi$ , as if the word blessedness did signify greatly to rejoice. Indeed, as David saith, Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy,' our joy will never be full, till we come to enjoy the beatifical vision; our joy here is only in hope and expectation.\* So St Paul, 'we rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 3; nor can our joy be full, till we come to the fruition of what we expect. Hence it is that all we have here is but a taste, then we shall drink deep of the river of pleasure. Now we have only the first fruits, hereafter our joy shall be as the joy of harvest. Finally, now the joy of the Lord enters into us, but then it is we shall 'enter into the joy of the Lord,' Mat. xxv. 21, and be as it were swallowed up in the boundless ocean of that joy. The truth is, according to this *ζωνωια*, so is the *χα̅ρα*; our exultation answereth our participation, because this fellowship cannot be perfect till we come to heaven, where we shall fully enjoy sanctity and immortality with God and Christ for ever. Therefore then, and not till then, shall this be verified, our joy shall be filled.

And now, to tell you how full that joy shall be, I want words. St Peter, speaking of our joy which we have in believing, calls it 'unspeakable, and full of glory,' 1 Peter i. 8. Indeed, *sentire est cordis, dicere non est oris*, the heart feeleth what the tongue cannot express; but oh then, how glorious, and not only unspeakable, but unconceivable shall that joy be in seeing. Surely, as when Christ miraculated wine, he filled the vessels to the brim, John ii. 7, so shall he fill the vessels of our souls, in that day, with the water of joy, to the very brim, so as there shall not be the least deficiency, but an abundance, yea, a superabundance, both over and ever flowing, to make glad the inhabitants of that heavenly city to all eternity.

What then is the inference which we are to draw from hence, but that we learn what joy to seek after, namely, that which is full, and wherein (to that end) to place it, namely, in fellowship with God and Christ?

Beloved, it is a false slander, an odious calumny, which by black mouths is belched forth against Christianity, as if it were an enemy to all joy; whereas it doth not extirpate, but ordinate our joy, teaching us to place it on the right object. You are mistaken when you think that we would rob you of your comfort, and spoil your mirth. No, brethren; our aim in endeavouring to bring you to God and Christ, is (to use Seneca's phrase upon better grounds) that you might never want mirth; † or according to St Paul's expression, 1 Thes. v. 16, that you may 'rejoice evermore.' Indeed, this is our scope, to confine your carnal joy, or rather refine it, that it may be pure, spiritual, and heavenly. Oh that you would at last be wise, and fix your joy in the right centre, by elevating it to the things above!

\* Aristot. Eth. l. 7 c. 12.

† Nolo tibi unquam deesse lætitiã.—*Sen. ep. 23.*

How should you say with that penitent father, Far be it, Lord, far be it from the heart of thy servant, that I should account myself happy by any earthly joy; that is the joy, which is not given to the wicked, but only to them who serve thee, whose joy thou thyself art; and that is the blessed life, to rejoice of thee, in thee, for thee; that is it, and no other;\* or in words not much unlike those of St Paul, Gal. vi. 14, God forbid that we should rejoice in anything, save in fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

2. Refer this clause to the former part of this verse, and then the truth which is manifestly implied is, that those things which the holy men of God did write, are able to give fulness of joy. This is the doctrine which I shall endeavour to illustrate, both generally of all the holy writings, and particularly of the apostolical writings.

1. There is fulness of joy to be had in the holy Scriptures. This was that which David experienced, and therefore affirmeth concerning himself, that the words of God were sweet to his taste, and he rejoiced in them, as one that found a great spoil, Ps. cxix. 103, 162; and that holy man Ambrose, upon those words, † breaketh forth into these expressions, I have great cause to rejoice, for I have found the spoils for which I have not laboured; I have found the pentateuch of Moses, the writings of the prophets; I have found Christ the wonderful counsellor; and Paul the prudent builder. For this reason, no doubt, it is, that the word of God contained in the Scripture is compared to light, and wine, and honey, and milk, all which are of a pleasing and exhilarating nature. ‡ Indeed, the holy Scriptures are a tree of life, whereof every tree is healing; or, according to St Chrysostom, § a pleasant garden, wherein every flower yields a fragrant smell; or to use St Ambrose || his comparison, a feast, in which every book is a dainty dish, affording both sweet and wholesome nutriment. No wonder if St Paul, speaking of the Scriptures, Rom. xv. 4, maketh mention of the patience, and hope, and comfort of the Scriptures, there being no such ground of hope and patience, and therefore no such comfort to be found elsewhere, as in these sacred books.

2. As this is true in general of all parcels of holy writ, so more especially of the apostolical writings. To this purpose St Cyril, ¶ mystically interpreting those words of the prophet Micah, that 'every man should sit under his vine, and under his fig-tree,' Micah iv. 4, observeth, that wine is an emblem of joy, the fig-tree of sweetness, and by both is shadowed that joy which the evangelical doctrine should produce in those who sit under the preaching of it. Indeed, those doctrines which reveal God and Christ, satisfaction to

\* Vide Aug. conf. lib. x. cap. 22.

† Vide Ambros. in Ps. cxviii.

‡ Vide Bern. serm. 64. § Chryst. hom. in Eutrop.

|| Ambros. de offic. lib. i. cap. 32.

¶ Vide Cyr. Al. ibid.



God by Christ, reconciliation to God in Christ, can only give solid comfort to the soul, since God out of Christ is a consuming fire, only in Christ he is a reviving sun; out of Christ he is a sin-revenging, only in Christ a sin-forgiving, God. Now these doctrines are nowhere made known but in holy writ, and they are most clearly delivered in the apostolical writings. What Moses, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah spake obscurely, that Paul, and Peter, and John declare plainly; and therefore, though we find joy in those, yet by these our joy is filled. It is not unworthy our observation in the text, that this clause, 'these things we write,' stands in the middle, between 'our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ,' and 'that your joy might be full,' as having indeed an influence on both; and by effecting the one, it produceth the other. These things which the apostles write reveal God and Christ, and the way of fellowship with them; and by bringing us to this fellowship, they convey unto us this fulness of joy and comfort.

To apply this in some short consecutaries.

1. How injurious is the superstition of the papists, and that both to the Scriptures themselves, and to the people.

(1.) To the Scriptures, in that they deny to them a perfect sufficiency,\* containing all things necessary to salvation; and that for this reason, that they might advance the esteem of their unwritten traditions. Indeed, such traditions as are not fictitious but real, not particular but universal, and clearly appear to be so, we reject not; but withal we assert there are no such traditions delivering anything necessary to salvation, which is not to be found either in express terms, or by evident consequences in the holy Scriptures; and that I may not wander, we meet with a strong argument to this purpose in my text. That which is able to give us full joy must not be deficient in anything which conduceth to our happiness; but the holy Scriptures give fulness of joy, and therefore the way to happiness is perfectly laid down in them. The *major* of this syllogism is so clear, that it needs no probation; for who can or will deny, that full joy is only to be had in a state of bliss? The *minor* is plain from this scripture, and may thus be drawn forth. That which the apostles aimed at in, may doubtless be attained to by, their writings; for they being inspired of God, it is no other than the end that God purposed in inspiring which they had in writing; and either God himself is wanting in the means which he hath designed for this end, or these writings contain in them what will yield fulness of joy, and to that end bring us to a state of blessedness.

(2.) To the people, whom they expressly forbid to read the holy Scriptures, esteeming the permission of them to the vulgar eye to be the casting of pearls before swine, and the giving holy things to dogs.†

\* Vide Bellarm. de verb. Dei, lib. iv. cap. 3.

† Laicis lectionem scripturæ permittere est sanctum dare

Hence is it that, in a seeming reverence to holy writ, and withal a pretended care of the laics, that they may not wrest the Scriptures to their own perdition, they lay upon them a prohibition; but the truth is, as they are but false friends to the Scripture, so in this they are manifest enemies to the people, bereaving them of that comfort which they might have in the reading of those divine books. Certainly the apostles intended that their epistles should be read both to and by them to whom they wrote them. Now these *you* to whom St John wrote were ordinary Christians, dispersed in several countries; such whom, in the second chapter, he calls not only *fathers*, but *young men* and *children*; and the other apostles expressly direct their epistles, to 'all that are called to be saints,' as well private persons in, as public officers of, the church. Nay, yet further, when we consider what singular benefit is to be gained by the reading of the holy Scriptures, for correction, instruction, and in particular, consolation, surely it is no small injury that the church of Rome by this prohibition doth to her members, even as great as if the mother should deny the dug to the tender infant.

2. How odious is the profaneness of those Christians who neglect the holy Scriptures, and give themselves to reading other books! How many precious hours do many spend, and that not only on work days, but holy days, in foolish romances, fablous histories, lascivious poems! And why this, but that they may be cheered and delighted, whenas full joy is only to be had in these holy books. Alas, the joy you find in those writings is perhaps pernicious, such as tickleth your lust, and promoteth contemplative wickedness. At the best it is but vain, such as only pleaseth the fancy and affecteth the wit; whereas these holy writings (to use David's expression, Ps. xix. 8) are 'right, rejoicing the heart.' Again, are there not many who more set by Plutarch's morals, Seneca's epistles, and such like books, than they do by the holy Scriptures? It is true, beloved, there are excellent truths in those moral writings of the heathen, but yet they are far short of these sacred books. Those may comfort against outward trouble, but not against inward fears; they may rejoice the mind, but cannot quiet the conscience; they may kindle some flashy sparkles of joy, but they cannot warm the soul with a lasting fire of solid consolation. And truly, brethren, if ever God give you a spiritual ear to judge of things aright, you will then acknowledge there are no bells like to those of Aaron's, no harp like to that of David's, no trumpet like to that of Isaiah's, no pipes like to those of the apostles; and you will confess with Petrus Damianus,\* that those writings of heathen orators, philosophers, poets, which

canibus et margaritas ante porcos projicere.—*Hos. de verb. Dei.*

\* Olim mihi Tullius dulcescebat, blandiebantur carmina poetarum, &c.—*Petri Dam. Ser. de Christi Natal.*



formerly were so pleasing, are now dull and harsh in comparison of the comfort of the Scriptures.

3. Lastly, Let us so diligently read, steadfastly believe, and obediently conform to these writings, that our joy may be full by them. It is very observable, what the prophet Jeremiah saith concerning himself, 'Thy words were sound, and I did eat them; and thy word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart,' Jer. xv. 16. The word caused in Jeremiah joy and rejoicing, that is, a full joy; but by what means? It was by eating it. So must we get comfort in the Scriptures by eating; that is, reading, meditating, and applying them to ourselves. Let then that counsel which St Ambrose\* giveth be acceptable to us: Eat, and eat daily of this heavenly manna, that thy hunger may be satisfied, and thy soul nourished to eternal life. Remember the advice which St Jerome† giveth: Whatever joys and pleasures others may take, let our delights be in the law of the Lord. Finally, hearken to the exhortation of Drogo Hostiensis:‡ Let not the law depart from thy heart; read and ponder again and again, that thou mayest find the savour of this manna, and with the bee, suck the sweetness of these heavenly flowers. And yet more particularly, when thou art cast into any danger, labourest under any affliction, make use of these writings for thy comfort, which are, as St Ambrose§ truly styleth them, the only refuge in all temptations. Excellently to this purpose is that even of a Roman bishop, in his exhortation to the clergy. Doth any one labour with ignorance? These writings are a light to the feet, and a lantern to his paths. Do we weep in this valley of tears? Here we may find that which will dry our eyes, and revive our spirit. Dost thou thirst after righteousness? Here is a fountain of pure water? Art thou spiritually hungry? Here is the bread which came down from heaven.¶ Indeed, there is no condition that can befall a Christian, to which these holy writings do not afford a suitable and proportioned consolation. I end this, therefore, with allusion to that expression of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xii. 3, 'With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.' These wells of salvation are evangelic truths, so St Jerome; spiritual sayings, so Procopius. Oh let us by the bucket of faith draw the water of comfortable doctrine out of those wells, to the joy and solace of our hearts.

I have now despatched the first and most genuine reading of this pronoun; the other (which the Greek scholiast¶ taketh notice of) would not be altogether

\* Ede Scripturarum cœlestium cibos, et ede ut permanent tibi in vitam æternam, &c.—*Ambros. in Ps. cxviii.*

† Habeant sibi cæteri si velint suas opes, gemmâ bibant, serico niteant, &c.—*Jerome, Ep. 155.*

‡ Non excedat tibi lex de ore cordis tui, volve, revolve, versa, reversa, ac tunc intelliges quid sapiat manna, &c.—*Drogo, Host. de sacram. Dom. pass. lib. i.*

§ Vide Ambros. l. d. Petr. Sim. Tilet.

¶ Vid. Rivet. Isag. p. 406.

¶ Eucumen. in loc.

passed by, which is ἡμῶν, a pronoun of the first person, since not only some Greek copies, but the Syriac version also, so renders it, 'that our joy might be full.'

And thus, as venerable Bede\* observeth upon these words, it lets us see what is the joy of a godly minister, namely, when the people by his declaring, preaching, writing, are brought to fellowship with God and Christ; and the more they gain to this fellowship, the more is their joy enlarged and filled up. Indeed, that I may borrow Seneca's† similitudes, if it cannot but delight the husbandman when he seeth his plants grow, his trees flourish, his fruits ripen; if it must needs rejoice the shepherd to behold his sheep sound, fat, and fruitful; if it glad the heart of a schoolmaster or tutor to observe his scholars thrive in learning, and increase in knowledge; it must needs be a matter of abundant joy to the ministers of the gospel, when they reap the fruit of their labour in the conversion and confirmation of their people.‡ This is that which this holy apostle John, as here, so elsewhere expresseth to be his temper, when writing to the elect lady, 2 John 4, he saith, 'I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth;' and when writing to the well-beloved Gaius, he saith, 3 John 4, 'I have no greater joy than that my children walk in truth.' The same spirit lodged in that blessed apostle Paul, who calls the Philippians, chap. iv. 1, his 'joy and his crown,' and the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20, his 'hope, his joy; his crown of rejoicing, his glory and his joy,' by which phrases is intimated an exceeding joy, glorying being the height of rejoicing. Nay, even emperors cannot take greater joy in their crowns, than he did in those of whose conversion God had made him instrumental; nay, as if he knew not how enough to be thankful, he breaketh forth into that pathetical question, chap. iii. 9, 'What thanks can we render to God for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes!' To this purpose was that pious speech of an holy bishop§ to his flock, *Impletis viscera mea, cum impletis mandata divina*, your fulfilling God's precepts is the filling up of my joy. We read in the parable, Luke xv. 9, of a woman, who, having found her lost goat, called her neighbours and friends to rejoice with her; that finding the lost goat is an emblem of a lost sinner gained to Christ, and the woman represents the minister, who cannot but greatly rejoice at his being the means of converting any sinner. Indeed, as we find afterward in that chapter, 'there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;' the truth is, there is joy both in heaven and in earth, whilst both the angels, those heavenly ministers, and ministers, those earthly angels, rejoice at the winning of souls to Christ.

\* Gaudium doctorum fit plenum, cum multos ad sanctæ ecclesiæ societatem perducunt.—*Bed. ibid.*

† Senec. ep. 24.

‡ Cum gaudere in hoc omnes fratres oportet, tum in gaudio communi major est episcopi portio.—*Cpr. ep. 7.*

§ Euseb. Verecell. Episcop.

This is the joy of godly ministers for the present, and shall be yet much more at the last day, 'in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming,' when (as St Gregory\* aptly) Peter shall appear with his converted Jews, and Paul with his converted Gentiles, and all pastors with their reduced sheep; when they, who have received any spiritual profit by us, shall give in evidence for us, and be as so many pearls set in our crown of glory.

Oh, then, how should we, that are the ministers of Christ, double, yea, treble our diligence in feeding the flock, according to Christ's threefold mandate! John xxi. 15-17; how should we bestir ourselves in all the ways, by all the means we can, by preaching, writing, and that in exhorting, reproof, comforting, that we may bring men to this fellowship, since it will be the filling of our joy! Indeed, a lazy, careless minister is not more the people's than his own enemy, since as he hindereth their good, so his own comfort; for if it be uncomfortable when we sow much and reap little, the success not answering our pains, it must needs be much more doleful, when conscience giveth in testimony against us, that we have sowed but little, having been careless and negligent in the discharge of our duty, since whereas the other is but only a cross, this is a curse, according to that of the prophet Jeremiah, xlviii. 10, 'Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently.'

But further, Oh that you who are the people would, upon this consideration, labour to profit by what we preach and write to you, that hereby you may fill our joy. Many of you pretend a great deal of love and respect to us; O my brethren, if you love us, do not grieve us by your unprofitableness. By your presence you fill our churches, by your maintenance you fill our purses; but what is this, if by your obedience you do not fill our joy? Many of you seem to pity us when you see us exhausting our spirits, wasting our bodies, weakening our strength, in preaching to you; Oh then, why do you not refresh our minds, revive our spirits,

\* Greg. hom. 17 in evang.

rejoice our hearts in requiting our pains with your fruitfulness? It is true, beloved, our work in itself is difficult, but your hard hearts are an heavier burden to us than our hard work. Truly if our hearts deceive us not, to find good wrought upon you by our pains is the best cordial you can give us, as that godly father said to his people of Antioch,\* I feel not the weight of my labour, because I am revived by the gain of you that are my auditors.

Let me then bespeak you, my dearly beloved parishioners and auditors, this day, in the same language St Paul bespoke his Philippians, chap. ii. 2, 'Fulfil you my joy' in your endeavour to profit by my ministry. Why shall we, who are evangelical sowers, be forced to complain that we sow our seed, if not among briars and thorns, which scratch and tear (the usage that too many have found in these days), yet among stones, so as it yields no fruit? Why do you force us with our preaching and praying to join tears in weeping for and over you, because of your barrenness? nay, why should we come in at the last day of judgment as witnesses against you, and be forced to give up our account with grief?

I end all; if, on the one hand, you will not be won to Christ by our ministry, know that as it is our sorrow it will be your misery, our heaviness, your unhappiness. If it be uncomfortable to us, it will be unprofitable to you; and if you put us upon a woe of condoling, you will meet with a woe of condemning; and, on the other hand, if our ministry be effectual to bring you into fellowship with God and Christ, know that it will not only be ours, but your joy (for so we may put both the readings of this clause together); we shall have some, and you will have much more cause of comfort in it. For this end it is, my brethren, that we shew, and declare, and write. Oh do not disappoint us of our hopes, and frustrate our desires, but for this cause do you hear, believe, and obey, that both your and our joy may be full.

\* Chrysost. ad pop. Antioch. hom. 9.

## SERMON IX.

*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—1 JOHN I. 5-7.*

**H**APPINESS is the centre in which all men's desires meet, and the mark at which all their intentions shoot. This is that which every one seeketh after for himself, and which Christ's apostles and ministers labour after, in regard of their people. The safety of the flock is the shepherd's care, the health of the patient the physician's work, and the people's salvation the hearty desire, prayer, and endeavour of

every faithful preacher; indeed, for this end, they are set as lights, placed as stars in the firmament of the church, that they may 'guide men's feet into the way of peace' and path of life.

True happiness principally, nay, wholly, consists in communion and fellowship with God in Christ, since he is that *summum bonum*, chief and universal good, the fruition of which alone can make us happy. No



wonder if St John, with the rest of the apostles, desiring to bring the people to blessedness, labour by their preaching and writing to make them partakers of this fellowship.

But as, indeed, *χαλιστα τα καλα*,\* all things of excellency are attended with difficulty, so is in special this fellowship. The truth is, to be mistaken in it is very easy; to partake of it is very difficult. The attainment of it will undoubtedly make us happy, but withal it is very hardly attained unto. Good reason then had St John, having signified this fellowship as that which was the end of his writing, to discuss in his writing at once the marks whereby we may know, and the means whereby we may attain it; with which he therefore begins in the words that I have now read, 'This then is the message which we heard of him,' &c.

Having already passed through the preface, we are now to handle the epistle itself. I shall not stay to give you an exact and particular analysis, or, as it were, anatomy of its body; and that chiefly because our apostle doth not tie himself to a strict and accurate method, though I doubt not but, in perusing the several chapters and parcels of it, we shall find a rational connection and dependence of one upon the other, and all upon the principal scope. It may for the present suffice to know, that the design of this discourse is, to instruct all men professing Christianity how they may try the truth of their profession; to erect a partition wall discriminating between heretical and orthodox, hypocritical and sincere Christians; finally, to deliver us a box of evidences, by which we may clear our interest in communion with God and Christ, and thereby our title to eternal life. And, indeed, this is that which our apostle implicitly insinuateth in the former verse, since the fulness of our joy must needs arise only from an apprehension of our part in this partnership, and expressly asserteth in the last chapter, v. 14, where he saith, 'These things have I written, that you may have eternal life.'

As for the words which I have now read, our apostle in them giveth us a breviary of what he intends to enlarge upon in the rest of the epistle, summarily proposing what he doth afterwards abundantly exemplify.† For if you peruse the whole epistle, you shall find, if not all, yet the greatest part spent in one of these three things: either in delineating the steps of the way whereby we walk in the light, such as are faith, obedience, contempt of the world, and especially love to God and our brethren; or in declaring the choice privileges of fellowship with God and Christ, namely, our justification, adoption, and glorification; or in describing those antichristian heretics who pretend to have fellowship with Christ, and walk in darkness. So that in few words, if you please, we

\* Plut. de lib. educ.

† Jam incipit rem ipsam attingere, suæque doctrinæ materiam proponit.—Lorin. in loc.

may call these three verses the text, and the rest of the epistle a commentary upon the text.

Begin we then now with the text; and in it, for our more orderly proceeding, be pleased to take a view of the *porch* and the *house*: and in the house, of the *foundation* and the *superstructure*; and in the superstructure, of the *two rooms*, directly opposite one to the other, the one as it were on the left, the other on the right hand.

The *porch* is contained in those words, 'This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare to you;' the *foundation* of the house in those, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;' and the *rooms* in the house are, on the one hand, the vain presumption, abominable lie of those who pretend to have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness; on the other, the assured fellowship with God, and cleansing by Christ, of those who walk in the light. Of each of these in their order, most humbly beseeching him who is the light to irradiate our minds with his heavenly beams, that we may clearly discern and effectually embrace those truths which are here set before us.

1. Enter we then into the *porch*, a clause which for substance and in effect we have already handled, as having met with it in the beginning of the third verse. And truly, were this only a repetition, it would not be supervacaneous, because no endeavour can be too much, as for the informing our apprehensions aright of, so for the confirming our faith in, and assent to, evangelical doctrines. Indeed, it is the policy of the devil, and that which by many ways he endeavoureth, to cause in us both a misunderstanding of and hesitation about gospel truths. It was the stratagem he used with our first parents, to beget in them a questioning, and then a denial of the verity of God's saying; and it is still his practice to make us either totally deny or causelessly doubt of divine writings. No marvel if the apostle, not once, but again, nay (as Lorinus\* observeth), thrice inculcates that what he was now to write was no other than what he had heard.

But as this is a repetition, so with some addition; and it is such an iteration as admits of variation. If you please to compare this with the precedent parallel clause, you shall find a noun and pronoun here added. Whereas before it is only *that which*, here it is *the message which*; and whereas there it is only *that which we have heard*, here it is *that which we have heard of him*. So that here are two things to be discussed *de novo*, which is, what it is that hearing they declared—a message; and of whom they received it—of him. And yet there is one thing more not touched before, because it more fitly falls in now; the persons who did hear of him and declare to us—we.

1. That which the apostles heard is here called a message; so our translation renders it, as also

\* Vide Gualt. Lorin. in loc.



Beza\* and the vulgar Latin version, according to which Grotius tells us, in one manuscript, it is ἀγγελία. Socinus would have us believe a mistake in the scribe of ε for α, and that it should be ἀπαγγελία, the noun of ἀπαγγέλλομεν, which is the verb our apostle useth here for *declaring*. But the usual reading in the Greek copy is ἐπαγγελία, and that in its most known acception signifieth a *promise*; nor (though I confess I am almost alone in it) do I see any reason why we should decline the word or its usual signification; nay indeed (at least to me), it seemeth very congruous and suitable. For,

(1.) It is the word which our apostle afterwards useth when he speaketh of the same thing, 1 John ii. 25, 'That which they had had from the beginning,' presently adds, 'This is the promise which he hath promised,' and so we have heard.

(2.) But chiefly, it is that which very aptly agreeth with the context, whether you look backward or forward.

[1.] In the former verse, the apostle acquaints the people that his end in writing these things was, 'that their joy might be full;' and here he tells us what those things were that would bring this fulness of joy, to which purpose he calleth them not barely a message, but a promise, which is a message of glad tidings, able to fill our joy.

[2.] If you look on what immediately followeth, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness,' though for this reason that signification of promise is rejected, because those words are assertory, not promissory; yet a late writer† hath observed (ingeniously, though not so solidly) a congruency even in these words, because light represents the communicative goodness of God. Here is a tacit and virtual promise, assuring us that God is ready to cast forth the beams of his grace and mercy on us.

(3.) But I conceive in this lieth the mistake of interpreters, that they understand this message to consist in the words immediately subsequent; whereas, if we examine it more narrowly, we shall find the substance of the message to be laid down in the seventh verse, to which the term of promise fitly agreeth, it being a manifest promise of fellowship with God and cleansing by Christ to them who walk in the light. And this is illustrated in the sixth verse by a redargution of that lying promise which presumptuous sinners, who walk in darkness, make to themselves, of having fellowship with God.

And as for those words in the fifth verse, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness,' they are apparently premised as a proof of the promise and confirmation of the message (for which reason I call them in the division the *foundation* of the building); and accord-

ingly that Greek particle, ὅτι, being as well causal as declarative, may be fitly, and is so rendered by the vulgar Latin, *quoniam*, *because*; and the sense will amount to this, 'Because God is light, and in him is no darkness,' therefore they, and they only, who walk in the light, being thereby like to him, can or shall have fellowship with him, cleansing by his Son. And this is the promise which [we] have heard of him.

This word, and thereby somewhat of the sense of the whole, being thus cleared to us, I cannot pass it over without a double note, well worthy our serious consideration.

1. The nature of the gospel's message: it is a promise.

2. The tenure of this promise: it is conditional.

1. The Syriac word here used signifieth *gospel*, the Greek, *promise*. Indeed, the gospel in its chief design is promissory: it is not only an historical narration of something done, but of this as done for us, and so a promissory declaration of God's good will towards us. The *protevangelium*, first gospel, preached by God to fallen Adam, Gen. iii. 15, is a plain promise, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' Nor is there any promise now made to man but what is contained in the gospel. The law is a denunciation of wrath, of a curse against us, because of transgression; only the gospel is an annunciation of mercy and forgiveness: that breatheth forth only a cold blast, a north wind of threatening; this sendeth forth a warm gale, a south wind of promise.

A promise it is, and that not of paying a debt, but bestowing a gift. Man's promise is oftentimes an act of justice, but God's of mere grace and free love; and therefore it is that his purpose, of which the gospel promise is the counterpart, is joined with grace, 2 Tim. i. 9; and that special promise of the gospel, forgiveness of sin, is said to be 'according to the riches of his grace,' Eph. i. 7; yea, one appellation given to the gospel is, that it is called the 'word of God's grace,' Acts xx. 32, because it manifesteth his free grace to sinners. And indeed, if we believe the Greek critic,\* this truth is wrapped up in the very word there used, this being the difference between ἐπαγγελία and ὑπόσχεσις, that the latter is only a promise of what is due, but the former of what is free.

A promise it is, and that such as hath many promises in the womb of it, and those, as the apostle Peter calls them, 2 Peter i. 4, 'exceeding great and precious,' not of temporals but spirituals, nay, eternal. Fellowship with God, remission, adoption, eternal life—what not?—are the choice and precious benefits which this promise revealeth and offereth to us. Indeed, it is a treasury of divine riches, a storehouse of the soul's provision, a cabinet of heavenly pearls, all things truly good and justly desirable being contained in and conveyed to us by this promise.

Oh let us learn to set an high value upon evangoli-

\* ὑπόσχεσις καὶ ἐπαγγελία διαφέρει, &c.—Ammon.

\* Vide Bez. Grot. Socin. in loc.

† Non secus ac si ingens nobis bonum Joannes promitteret, de Deo enuntiat ipsum omni modo lumen esse, &c.—Velasq in Philip. i. 2. Annot. 2 mor.

cal doctrine. 'Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name,' saith the psalmist, Ps. cxxxviii. 2; 'Thou hast magnified thy gospel above all thy word,' may we say, and that upon this ground, because it is promissory revelation. Surely if the whole word of God be as milk, the promising part is as the cream of that milk; if that be as a firmament of stars, this is as the sun in that firmament; finally, if that be as a feast, this is the sweetest dish in that feast. 'Desire,' saith the apostle Peter, 1 Peter ii. 2, 3, 'the sincere milk of the word (meaning the gospel) if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Indeed, we may taste the verity of God in all his words, the equity of God in his commands, the severity of God in his threats; but we only taste the mercy of God, how gracious he is, in the evangelical promises. And surely tasting, we cannot but singularly esteem and fervently desire it.

2. Calvin and Grotius\* make the sense of these words, 'this is the promise,' to intend thus much. The promise which we bring to you hath this condition annexed to it, to wit, of walking in the light; and therefore it is expressed with an *if*, an hypothetical conjunction. That, then, which we have further to take notice of, and would by no means be omitted, is, that the promise of the gospel is conditional; it is a position with a supposition. Nor are the benefits in it granted absolutely, but respectively.

It is a question moved by some, how the promise can be free and yet conditional; not considering the difference between a *meritorious cause*, for which a thing ought to be, and a *necessary condition*, without which it cannot be effected. Were there a proportion of equality between the thing promised and required, the promise could not be free; but the evangelical condition is such only as maketh us meet for, not worthy of, the thing promised, and therefore hath only a proportion of congruity. Mercy, then, is the spring from whence the promise floweth, but duty is the channel in which it runneth down to us. The primary design of the law was precept, commanding us to do, though there was annexed to it a promise, which, upon doing what was commanded, we should receive. The principal scope of the gospel is promise, revealing what God is pleased to do for us, yet so as that there are precepts annexed to it, which require somewhat to be done by us that we may obtain the promise.

What, then, God hath joined together, let not us put asunder. The most of us, with Malehus, have but one ear, to hear the promise, but not the precept of the gospel. We like well to gather the rose, and suck the honey of a promise, but the condition we hate as the prickles and sting. We would gladly have the privilege assured, and yet we abhor the duty required; but be not deceived, if you will have the one you must do the other. God will not fulfil his part unless we per-

\* Vide Calv. Grot. in loc.

form ours, and therefore it is in vain to expect an accomplishment of his promise but on his own terms. In fine, the gospel is a promise, let us not be so unthankful unto God and Christ as to reject it. It is a conditional promise, let us not be so injurious to ourselves as to misapply it.

2. The apostles heard this message of *him*. If you ask, *Of whom?* the answer is to be fetched from the end of the third verse: 'the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.' It would not be passed by that the apostle, speaking of two persons, nay, implicitly of all three, useth the singular number, saying, not which we heard of them, but him; from which, though Socinus\* would only gather an unity of will and affection, yet the orthodox conclude an unity of essence and nature. The multitude of believers were of one heart, in the primitive times, and one soul, Acts iv. 32; yet it would have been very improper to have spoken of them as one man; but inasmuch as the Father and the Son, though two persons, have one and the same essence, it was very proper to use the singular number: that 'which we have heard of *him*.'

That which we are here to take notice of is,

1. Partly that these apostles heard before they declared. It is very observable that in the Hebrew tongue the same verb in Kal (קָלַל) signifieth to learn, and in Piel to teach, and the same noun (עֲלֵם) signifieth both an hearing and a report; and indeed the Greeks use *ἀκούω*, and the Latins *audire*, in the same sense, whereby is intimated to us that we must be hearers ere we be speakers, learners ere we be teachers, scholars before we be tutors. And I could heartily wish that this consideration might be a check to the inconsiderate rashness of those giddy heads in this age, who never sat at Gamahiel's feet, and yet step into Moses his chair; and though they have scarce learned anything themselves at either school or academy, adventure to teach the people in these sacred oratories.

2. Chiefly, that what they declared to the world was no other than what they heard from Christ. This is that which, as St John asserteth here, so St Paul elsewhere concerning himself: 1 Cor. xi. 23, 'That which I have received of the Lord, I have delivered unto you;' and in another place, chap. vii. 23, 'Not I, but the Lord.' Thus it was with the apostles, and thus it was with the prophets, who uttered nothing but what was by God revealed to them; and therefore you find them very often bringing in *Sic dicit Dominus*, 'Thus saith the Lord.'

1. It is an item to ministers, that our faithfulness appear in delivering, as wholly, so only, the counsel of God, the mind of Christ, revealed in his word to the people; whilst Jesuits declare what they hear from the pope, as accounting him infallible; whilst enthusiasts declare what they hear from the devil, mistaking his delusions for the Spirit's inspirations; let the ministers of Christ declare nothing but what they hear,

\* Socin. in loc.



though not immediately, yet mediately, from Christ. Oh far be it from us to pretend to be his messengers, and yet to vent our own inventions, and preach our own fancies! What ambassador dare deliver anything to a foreign prince but what the king his master giveth him in charge? Oh let us, who are the ambassadors of Christ, declare nothing but that message with which he sends us.

2. It is a document to the people, that the apostolical writings, and our preaching according to them, be received by you with faith and reverence, because they are no other than the dictates of Christ.\* Indeed, whose authority should prevail, if not Christ's? And with whom, if not the church? It is the character of Christ's sheep, that 'they know his voice, and follow it,' John x. 4. We need not fear that he who is the way will cause us to wander, who is the truth will cause us to err, who is the faithful witness will go about to deceive us. So long as we speak the truth in and from Christ, and lie not, do you believe and doubt not.

3. The *ve* to whom Christ was pleased to impart this message, and by whom he declared it to the world, would be considered, and that especially in respect of their mean and low condition. If you look upon St John and the rest of these holy apostles with a carnal eye, there was nothing in them which might render them worthy of so high a prerogative.† They were poor, rude, illiterate, despised fishermen; and who were they, that Christ should employ them to be his ambassadors? Kings do not use to send beggars and peasants of their errands, but Christ was pleased to make use of these contemptible persons for his embassy. In this respect it is the apostle saith, 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' 2 Cor. iv. 7. Not golden or silver, but earthen vessels, are chose by Christ for the receiving and communicating of this heavenly treasure of the gospel. Indeed, whether you look on things or persons, still they are mean and despicable, which Christ employeth in his service. As the prophet from God appointed the water of Jordan to be the means of curing Naaman's leprosy, so hath our Lord Christ instituted water, and bread, and wine, common ordinary creatures, to be the pledges of his love, and conduit-pipes of his grace to the church; and as common things, so ordinary persons are thought fittest by him to be employed in his work; indigent, ignorant fishermen must be the publishers of his gospel to the world. It is that which lets us see the freeness, the strangeness, and the wisdom of divine dispensations.

The *freeness*, in that, as the apostle speaketh, 'there is no respect of persons with God,' Rom. ii. 11. It is not external qualifications that Christ looketh at; the poor as well as the rich, the simple as soon as the wise,

\* Ideo reverenter atque inviolabiliter debetis retinere quod mihi Dominus tradidit, et ego vobis.—*Ans. in Cor.*

† Nihil in illis videbis quod aliquâ prærogativâ dignum censeas.—*Guall. in loc.*

the base as easily as the noble, are accepted of him; nay, many times he passeth by these, and chooseth those.

The *strangeness*, in that it is so contrary to the dictates of carnal reason. Who would not have thought it the most probable way of spreading the gospel, if Christ had employed the scribes that were learned in the law, and the rulers of the people, to have been the publishers of it? But 'God's ways are not as our ways, neither are his thoughts as ours,' Isa. lv. 8. He loves to tread in uncouth paths, and for the most part such as are cross to our reason.

The *wisdom*, in that this serveth much to magnify his own name. Look as the less aptitude there is in the matter, so the less energy there is in the instrument, so much the greater doth the skill, power, and causality of the efficient appear; the less there is of men in any work, the more of God is seen. To do so great a work as the publishing and promoting of Christian religion, by such weak instruments as the apostles were, cannot but highly advance the honour of Christ; since, as St Paul speaketh, 2 Cor. iv. 8, hereby 'the excellency of the power is manifested to be of God, and not of man.'

2. And thus I have given you a view of the *porch*; be pleased now to go into the *house*, and therein to take a survey of the,

1. *Foundation*, as it is laid down in those words, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' If we consider these words in their utmost latitude, they are both a position and a probation; but this latter I shall defer to the following words. For the more full handling of this clause as a position, be pleased to observe something, both more general and more special.

1. In general, the words are a metaphorical description of God. For, beloved, when the apostle saith, 'God is light,' we must not think that the nature of God is the same with that of light. Indeed, as St Austin\* well observeth, the sun is light, and the moon is light, and the other stars are light; but far be it from us to imagine that the Creator's essence is the same with the creature's, but something far more choice and excellent; only by light as a similitude the apostle would represent something of God to us. And thus it is not unworthy our consideration, that,

(1.) The metaphor which St John maketh choice of is drawn from a thing very obvious and familiar to us. Indeed, as one saith well, light is that than which nothing is more unknown, and yet nothing more known, † being that which is visible to every eye; and in this respect the fitter to illustrate God by, that by what we do know we may be instructed concerning him whom we do not know. It is a fit pattern for all ministers to follow, whose work is not to make plain things hard (as too many do), but to make hard things plain; and

\* Aug. in Ep.

† Nihil luce notius simul et ignotius.—*Lor. in loc.*



therefore to draw their similitudes from common and manifest things, such as may not cast a veil over, but give a lustre to, the truth they deliver. Indeed, the end of these similitudes is chiefly to help the mind in conceiving, and the memory in retaining, what is by them represented. Now familiar comparisons are both more quickly understood and easily remembered, and therefore ought especially to be used.

(2.) The apostle, endeavouring to instruct us concerning the Creator, borroweth a resemblance from the creature. Indeed, as the apostle Paul speaketh, there is *γνώστωσιν του Θεου*, 'something to be known of God' by the creatures, Rom. i. 20. The earth, and every pile of grass that groweth out of it, but much more the heavens, and the beams of light that flow from it, 'declare the glory of God,' Ps. xix. 1. God hath vouchsafed somewhat of his excellencies to the creatures, and therefore in them we may, nay, ought, to read something of God, and that not only in respect of his being, but attributes.

Oh let us study this divine art, learn this spiritual alchemy, to extract heaven out of earth, God out of the creature, that as we behold the works of his hand, so we may in and by them see the excellency of the worker. It is a known maxim in philosophy, *Omnis cognitio fit per sensum*, All natural knowledge entereth into the mind by the sense; and it is thus far true in divinity, that spiritual knowledge may be helped by the sense. Happy is that man who maketh the things which he seeth as so many stairs, by which his contemplation goeth up to God whom he doth not see.

2. In particular, this metaphorical description of God is set forth affirmatively, 'God is light,' and negatively, 'in him is no darkness at all;' and both may be construed two ways, to wit, as spoken of God, considered either *τη φύσει* or *τη ενεργεία* in himself, or in his influences.

1. In himself, and that,

1. Affirmatively, God is light. And thus

(1.) This metaphor of light (though but darkly) shadoweth forth the Trinity: the Father being as the body of light, the Son as the beams, the Holy Ghost as the splendour of both. Dionysius\* illustrateth it by the similitude of three candles, enlightening one and the same room; Damascene† of the parheli, when there appear as it were three, and yet it is but one sun. Some have observed a resemblance of it in the Hebrew *לש*, the Greek *φως*, the Latin *lux*, which signify light; all of which are monosyllables, consisting of three letters. And in the Hebrew word they observe *ש* to be the beginning of *לש*, which signifieth the Father; and *ל* to be the beginning of *רוח*, which signifieth the Spirit; and *ו* being the middle letter, may aptly represent the Son, which is the middle person, especially being near of kin to *ב*, the first letter of *בן*, which signifieth the Son; but as I would not altogether condemn, so

\* Dionys. de divin. nomin. c. ii.

† Damasc. de fid. lib. i. cap. iv.

neither do I much delight in, such kind of observations. And besides, it is no doubt alien from the apostle's scope, to intend by this metaphor a resemblance of the Trinity.

(2.) That, therefore, which is to be considered, is, in what respects this metaphor of light doth resemble the nature and attributes of God.

And there are several attributes of God, which are aptly delineated in the various properties of light.

(1.) The light of all bodies is the most immaterial and uncompounded, whereby the simplicity and spirituality of God's nature may be insinuated, which is void not only of all matter, but of all composition.

(2.) The light is the first of all the creatures which we find mentioned in the beginning of Genesis. The first thing that God said, on the first day of the creation, was, 'Let there be light,' Gen. i. 3; and this shadowed forth the eternity of God's being, who is both *A* and *Ω*, the first and the last, before all other things whatsoever.

(3.) The light shineth in all parts of the world, east, west, north, south, every way scattering its rays; and what is this but an emblem of the ubiquity of God's presence, who is in all places, filling heaven and earth?

(4.) The light is a creature of a resplendent beauty and lustre, by reason of which it is apt to dazzle the eyes of the beholder; and this sets forth God's transcendent majesty and glory: in which respect he is said to 'cover himself with light as with a garment,' Ps. civ. 2, and to 'dwell in the light, which no man can approach unto,' 1 Tim. vi. 13.

(5.) The light is of that nature, that it cannot but impart itself for the good of others, shining upon the just and unjust; and this characteriseth the diffusive goodness of God, whereby it is that as he is good, so he doth good, and that to all.

But there are more particularly two attributes which light doth clearly discover, and which may agree to the scope of the apostle, especially the latter.

(1.) The light is of a discovering nature, so that 'nothing can be hid from the heat thereof,' Ps. xix. 6; it prieth into every corner, it peepeth in at every crevice, so that all things are made manifest by it: in which respect it mindeth us of God's omniscience, whereby it is that 'all things are naked and open to him,' Heb. iv. 12, even things that are most secret. 'To thee,' saith David, Ps. cxxxix. 11, 'the darkness and the light are all one,' because God seeth in the dark as plainly as in the light. By his own light he 'revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him,' saith Daniel, chap. ii. 22; finally, 'I try the reins,' saith God of himself, Jer. xvii. 10, our minds being as apparent to him as the entrails of a beast are to us when the body is ripped up.

It is a truth well worthy our meditation, that we may be hereby admonished to take heed to our ways.

Indeed, in this respect, that which is appropriated to good men is true of all men; they walk in the light, to wit, of God's omniscience; and oh, then, how careful should we be of our walk! Alas! how vainly do hypocrites please themselves in the secrecy of their actions, and perhaps persuade themselves that God himself taketh no notice of their doings; whereas 'his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings: there is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves,' saith Elihu concerning God, Job xxxiv. 21, 22. Indeed, as St Ambrose excellently,\* 'If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him, whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun.'

(2.) But to draw near the apostle's scope, light is a pure desiccate body, a bright spotless splendour. Though it shine upon filthy dunghills, it contracts no pollution, but still retaineth its pure lustre; and by this aptly is represented the holiness and purity of God. That expression of the prophet Malachi concerning Christ, chap. iv. 2, giveth much light to this truth, when he calleth him a 'Sun of righteousness;' since what the sun is in sensibles, that is God among intelligibles; and what light is in the sun, that is righteousness and holiness in God.† This is that attribute by which God is often called in Scripture, the holy God, Isa. lxiii. 3, and the holy One, xliii. 15; yea, the angels double, nay, treble it, 'Holy, holy, holy.' It is an attribute so essential to God, that every thing, so far as it hath relation to God, is said to be holy: his name holy, his word holy, his works holy, his day an holy day, his temple an holy place, his ministers holy persons, and all because he is a pure and holy God.

2. For the better illustrating of this perfect purity and sanctity of God, it is that our apostle goeth on, and to his affirmative addeth a negative, 'In him is no darkness at all.'

Zanchy hath observed concerning this c'ause, ‡ that it may be referred both to the predicate and the subject of the former proposition, and so may be rendered *in it*, or *in him*. In it, to wit, the light, there is no darkness, and so it is as much as if said, God is a most bright light; for look as the darkness, which hath no light at all, is a thick Egyptian Cimmerian darkness, so that light which hath no darkness must needs be a most clear, splendid light; but I rather refer it with our translators to the subject, *God*, (though the difference is not material), 'in him is no darkness at all.'

Before I proceed, a stumbling-block would be removed, that seeming contradiction of the psalmist to this of St John, where he saith concerning God, 'he made darkness his secret place,' Ps. xviii. 11; but it

is easily reconciled, since that darkness only noteth the inscrutable and incomprehensible majesty of God;\* and it is to be understood of him in reference to us, not himself. In respect of us, because we cannot comprehend him, darkness is his secret place; but in regard of himself, the purity of his own nature, he is light and not darkness, as the sun, though it be sometimes hid from us by dark clouds, remaineth still in itself most lightsome.

And now, if you would know the intent of this negative, it is but the more strongly to affirm the contrary. This is an usual way of expression in the Hebrew, as Beza† observeth from that speech of Isaiah to Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 1, 'Thou shalt die, thou shalt not live;' and of David, concerning himself, Ps. xl. 10, 11, 'I have preached, and have not refrained,' 'I have not hid, I have declared;' and it is a form of speaking very usual with St John, as you may find in the very next verse, and several other places of the epistle, which it shall suffice (because it here first appeareth) once for all to take notice of.

This appearing to be the scope; the meaning is no more but this, God is light, and in him is no darkness; that is, God is so pure, that not the least, the smallest, spot can cleave to him; so holy, that not any sin at all can be found in him. As there is no defect in his knowledge, so there is no default in his nature; and to this tend those expressions of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 4, he is 'a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he;' and of David, Ps. xcii. 15, 'He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him;' and again, Ps. v. 4, 'Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee.' Indeed, the gods of the heathen were such as had been impure, filthy men, and therefore, as one of themselves argueth, no gods; but the true God cannot be charged with any iniquity; ‡ nay, as Carthusian§ enlargeth it, because it may be said of the angels that stand, and the saints that are glorified, they have no darkness of sin at all in them; in God there is not so much as a defectibility or mutability, which yet is in the creatures, if considered in themselves, because of their dependency, though the reducing of it into act is impossible, in regard of their plenary confirmation in the state of bliss. God, then, as Aquinas|| excellently, is a pure, a most pure act, without the least potentiality; and so this, in the highest sense, agreeth to him, and to him only, 'he is light, and in him is no darkness at all.'

2. These words are true of God, not only formally, but causally; in himself, but in regard of his influence, and that in both the clauses.

1. Light is light, that is, according to St James's

\* Vide Œcumen. in loc. Lorin. in Ps.

† Vide Bez. Marlor. Lorin. in loc.

‡ Nec ignorantia nec nequitia in Deo.—*Dydlim.* τὴν Σοφίαν τὴν ἀβυσσὸν οὐκ ἴσκει Σοφία.—*Eurip.*

§ Vide Carthus in loc.

|| Aquin. in 1 Tim. vi. 17.

\* Ambros. Offic. lib. i. cap. 14.

† Vide Gr. Naz. Orat. x1.

‡ Vide Zanc. in loc.



expression, 'the Father of lights,' James i. 17; so that whatever light there is in any creature, it is but a ray, a beam of his excellency. That distinction of a threefold kind of light is very considerable to this purpose; there is *lux*, light,—

*Illuminata et non illuminans*, enlightened, and not enlightening; to wit, the air.

*Illuminata et illuminans*, enlightened, and enlightening; such is the moon.

*Illuminans et non illuminata*, enlightening, but not enlightened; and this is the sun.

It is that which may be fitly applied here: all Christians are lights as the air, ministers are lights as the moon, but only God is light as the sun; to wit, receiving no light from any other, and communicating to others what light they have. And this exposition Zanchy conceiveth most suitable to the apostle's meaning in this place, making the parallel to run thus:\* Look as the light where it ariseth, and displayeth its beams, expels darkness, and all the effects of it, and maketh all to be clear and lightsome, so doth God, to all them who have fellowship with him, impart the light of his grace, so that they can no longer walk in the darkness of sin; and though I conceive that the apostle's aim is chiefly to describe the purity of God's nature in himself, and thereby the repugnancy of walking in darkness, and consonancy of walking in the light, to him (both because this carrieth in it a full sense, correspondent to the apostle's intention, and also because the phrases of 'no darkness in him,' and afterwards 'his being in the light,' do intimate that these words are to be understood rather *subjectivè*, than *effectivè*, of what God is in himself, than what he doth to us), yet withal I cannot but acknowledge this construction to be both pious and ingenuous.

2. And, accordingly, the sense of the other clause, 'in him is no darkness at all,' amounts to this, that he is not, cannot be the cause of any darkness.

It is true, God is said in Scripture to 'create darkness,' as well as to 'form light,' Isa. xlv. 7; but that is the darkness of calamity, not of iniquity. It is true, God hath an hand even in the darkness of sin, so far as to limit it, how far it shall spread, and no farther; as to permit that it shall be, and suffer men to walk in it; as judicially to withhold the light of his grace from them who love darkness rather than light, whereby they plunge themselves into greater darkness; finally, so as to bring light out of the darkness, good out of evil, and make all the darkness of sin tend accidentally to illustrate the glory of his own wisdom, justice, and mercy; but still, far be it from him to be any way an impelling cause of any wickedness.

Indeed, these two do one necessarily flow from the other; there is no darkness in, therefore none can be from him. *Nil dat quod non habet*, is a known rule in philosophy; no cause can communicate to another what it hath not in itself; surely, then, God having no

\* Vide Zanch. in loc.

darkness in himself, cannot be any cause of it in us. Besides, he is an hater, an avenger of darkness, and it cannot consist with his justice to be a punisher of it, were he himself the author.\* In a word, it is impossible that the same cause should directly produce contrary effects. 'Can the same fountain send forth sweet and bitter,' fresh and salt water? No more can God, who is light, and the natural cause of light, be the author of darkness.

To draw to an end in a word of application.

1. Our apostle here implicitly teacheth us by what means we may come to know something of God; indeed, those three ways which the schools† mention of knowing God, *per riam causalitatis, eminentie, et remotionis*, by way of efficiency, eminency, and remotion, are all to be found in this scripture.

We know God by way of *causality*, when we assert him the prime, supreme, universal cause of all good whatsoever; we know him by way of *eminency*, when we attribute to God whatsoever perfection or worth there is in any or all the creatures, and that as being in him after a more eminent manner; finally, we know God by way of *remotion*, when we deny of him whatever imperfection and defect is observable in the creature. A taste of all these our apostle here giveth us, since, if we understand the words both formally and causally, he proclaimeth him the cause of that light and beauty and excellency that is in us; he attributeth to him that which is the most noble among inanimate creatures, light, and he removeth from him darkness, which is a defect and deformity.

2. Learn we with this holy apostle to have high and holy thoughts of God, as most pure and free from all pollution. Indeed, there have not wanted such sons of Belial who have charged God with sin, as the Luciferians, who blame God for dooming Lucifer to eternal darkness; the Talmud, which blasphemously forgeth the new moons, as appointed for an expiation of a fault in the Deity, of taking away the light from the moon and giving it to the sun; and too many there have been who charge their own sins upon God, as Plautus brings in a deoboist wretch pleading for himself, *dii voluerunt*; and St Augustine speaketh of some Jews who would say when they had done any crime, *Deus voluit*.‡ Oh let all such opinions be to us as they were to that father, detestable and abominable; and as St Basil§ adviseth, though God's counsels may many times seem strange to our reason, yet let that axiom be firmly rooted in our minds, τὸ μὴ εἶναι κακὸν παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ γενέσθαι, that no evil can come from the good God, no darkness from him who is light. Indeed, there are two attributes of God wherein

\* *Deus non est author eorum quorum est ultor*—*Fulg.* lib. iii. *ad Monim.* cap. 3. Vide Damasc. de orthod. fide, lib. iv. cap. 20.

† Aquin, part i. q. 13, art. i.

‡ Aug ad art. fals. imposit., resp. x 13, 14.

§ *Deus non est autor mali.*—*Bas. orit.*



he especially delights, his mercy and his holiness. Oh let us take heed how we diminish the one or deface the other, when we speak of God after the manner of men; as we represent his power by the arm, his mercy by the bowels, his justice by the hand, so his holiness by the face. Oh how great an injury must he needs account it, if we shall throw dirt in his face! and therefore remember the caution of St James, chap. i. 13, 'Let no man say when he is tempted that he is tempted of God, for God tempteth no man, neither can he be tempted.'

3. Lastly, let us learn of whom to seek whatsoever light we stand in need of: 'Every good and every perfect

gift' (saith the fore-mentioned apostle, chap. i. 17), 'cometh down from above;' we must shine in his beam, be kindled at his flame, and be lighted by his torch. Like the moon, we are dark bodies, till 'the glory of the Lord arise upon us;' if we lack any light of wisdom, of grace, of comfort, we must ask it of and only expect it from God. And therefore in a sense of our own darkness let us sue to him for that spiritual illumination which may guide and conduct us through the wilderness of this world, till we come to the heaven of heavens, where 'God,' in an especial manner, 'is the light of it,' and 'in his light we shall see light,' even the light of his face in glory for ever.

## SERMON X.

*If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*—1 JOHN I. 6.

IT is an undoubted truth that all parcels of holy writ are alike in respect of their divine authority and unerring verity. But it is as true that there is some difference between them in respect of clear perspicuity and beneficial utility; some parts of Scripture being, as more plain, so more useful than others. Such, no doubt, are those upon which the Holy Ghost hath, as it were, set a mark, and to which he hath affixed an afterism. Thus when we meet with a *Selah* in the close, or a *Verily, verily*, in the beginning of any sentence, and yet when we find any dignifying clause placed in the front or rear of any discourse, it is no doubt the Spirit's intention to put us hereby on a more serious consideration on such scriptures, as containing somewhat in them of more than ordinary importance. No doctrine more fundamentally necessary to be believed than that of salvation by Christ incarnate, and therefore St Paul doth not barely assert it, but prefixeth an encomium before it: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.' No lesson more needful to be learned by a believer than that of maintaining good works; and therefore the same apostle, calling upon believers to learn it, annexeth a preface, Titus iii. 8, 'This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly.' And surely upon this very account we have a deal of reason to look upon this present text as nearly concerning us, since we find the doctrines of it ushered in with an exordium, 'This is the message which we have heard of him and declare to you,' &c.

3. Having already led you through the *porch*, and given you a view of the *foundation*, I hope I shall not need to go back and take a review; pass we therefore into the *rooms* of this fabric, which are a reproof and a promise, the one in the sixth and the other in the seventh verse; that is, as it were, on the left hand, inhabited by those whom Christ will one day place on his left hand, to wit, presumptuous hypocrites, and the other on the right hand, inhabited by those who

shall be set on Christ's right hand, namely, sincere and holy Christians.

1. The reproof is that I am now to begin with, concerning which (before I fall upon particulars) it will not be amiss to observe in general, that it is at once both sharp and mild, discovering those two graces to be sweetly conjoined in this apostle (which it is pity they should in any be severed), zeal and discretion, the one making him faithful, and the other gentle, in framing his reprehension.

1. On the one hand, it is very considerable what plainness of speech St John useth in this reproof. He is not meal-mouthed, but sharp-tongued; in home and downright language, he telleth these sinners their own. It might have sufficed the apostle to say, They who walk in darkness can have no fellowship with God; but see, he useth more harsh terms, giving them the lie, 'who say they have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness.' We say in our English proverb, a lie deserveth the stab; it is accounted by all nations an high offence to tell a man he lieth, but the zeal of this holy man maketh him bold and sharp in his expressions. How well doth fervent vehemency become a minister in all his addresses to the people, but especially when he reproveth! Some, in dealing with sinners and rebuking their sins, are like men that handle thorns, as if they durst not touch them; they are loath to rub too much upon their auditors' sores, and dare not pierce them to the quick; but surely as a cold and heartless petitioner beggeth a denial, *quæ timidè rogat, docet negare*, so a cold and heartless re-prover doth but harden and hearten the sinner in his evil ways. St Paul bids Titus not only to reprove, but to do it *ἀποτόμως*, 'sharply,' so our translators; 'cuttingly,' so the force of the original; like good chirurgeons, that lance and search the sore to the bottom. Indeed, a pitiful cruelty is far better than a cruel pity; yea, and there is sound health in those smart wounds.

And indeed, if we consider with whom our apostle had to do, we shall find it was not without just reason that he is so bitter against them. It is the counsel of St Jude concerning offenders, ver. 22, 23, 'Of some have compassion, making a difference, but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.' We must put a difference in the persons whom we reprove, and accordingly put a difference in our reproofs. Those who offend through infirmity, and declare themselves penitent, are to be rebuked with lenity, lest they be swallowed up of grief and despair; but others we must save with fear, that is, by terrifying them with threats, and with a loving violence plucking them out of the fire of those destructive courses. Such are all obstinate transgressors, who, offending heinously, are to be checked severely, to whom (when they spurn at our rebukes) we return St Austin's answer,\* When you amend your lives, we shall mend our language.

More especially of this kind are presumptuous hypocrites, a sort of men with whom our apostle had here to do, and which of all others deserve to be roughly handled; and that upon a double ground, the heinousness of their sin, and the highness of their self-conceit.

1. Hypocrites are the worst of sinners. We may wrong a wicked man in calling him an hypocrite, but we cannot injure an hypocrite in calling him a wicked man. What the moralist saith of the ungrateful, *ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris*, is as true of the hypocritical person, he is a very sink of all filth. Hypocrites are not only the children of the devil, but as it were his first-born: *Malus ubi bonum se simulat, tunc est pessimus*, a bad man is then really worst when he is seemingly best. No wonder if such sinners find what they so well deserve, tart and severe rebukes from the mouths of God's messengers.

2. Besides, hypocrites, though the worst of men, have the best conceits of themselves, and it is no easy matter to take them off. They are 'pure in their own eyes, though they be not washed from their filthiness,' Prov. xxx. 12; and being miserably poor, account themselves rich, and increased with goods, Rev. iii. 17. They lull themselves asleep, sing a *requiem* to their souls, soothing up themselves with an *omnia bene*, so that there is need of loud cries to awaken them. Indeed, penitent sinners are sharp to themselves, and therefore God's ministers must use lenitives to them; but arrogant hypocrites are indulgent to themselves, and therefore they must apply corrosives to them. No man needs a more severe reprover than the self-flatterer.

It is then a fit item for all ministers, when they have to do with hypocrites, to rebuke them sharply. True, indeed, though none more need reproof, yet none are more unwilling to hear and bear it than they. This sort of men commonly have briars hanging at their ears, to scratch those who deal roughly with them.

\* Emendate vitia, et ego emendabo verba.—Aug.

Condemn the feigned shows, seeming professions of hypocrites; and they will presently deery you as a scoffer at religion, railer against the godly party, and an enemy to the saints. But we must not neglect our duty, what misconstruction soever they are pleased to put upon it. We have the pattern of Christ himself, who, speaking to the scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, useth upbraiding language; whilst he compareth them to wolves in sheep's clothing, to whited sepulchres, yea, to serpents and vipers, denounceth severe woes against them, Mat. xxiii. 27, 33; and in his epistle to Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 9, mentioning those who were dissembling Jews, he accounts them worthy of no better names than 'liars, and the synagogue of Satan.' This was the practice of his forerunner, John the Baptist, who, observing the hypocritical pharisees to come to his baptism, resembleth them to the most venomous creatures, and calleth them a 'generation of vipers,' Mat. iii. 7; finally, this is the example which this other John, his beloved disciple, here sets us, giving hypocrites (and that no less justly than sharply) the lie.

2. On the other hand, it is no less observable, that St John, in directing his reproof, useth not the second, but the first person, saying, not if *you*, but if *we*; by which his intent (no doubt) is to demonstrate the impartiality of his spirit, that if he, or any other of the apostles, could or should be guilty of this fault, he would be no less severe to himself and them than he was to these hypocrites.\* By this means he plainly lets them see that these words were not written in passion, much less out of any hatred to their persons, but only to their practice; since he is no more violent against them than he would be against himself upon the same occasion. Hereby the edge of his reproof was much taken off, which otherwise might have been too sharp, and the potion sweetened which else might have proved too bitter. It is a singular skill and prudence in a reprover, so to qualify his severest censures, as they may appear to be free from either wrath or malice. Indeed, froward and much more malicious reproofs do not *corrigere*, but *corrodere*, instead of healing, fret the sore; like too much wind, instead of increasing, put out the flame of devotion. To take off all such suspicions, and to render reproof the more acceptable, it is that the messengers of God have found out several ways of mitigating their reproofs. For this end it was that Moses composed his tart reprehension of Israel's ingratitude, in the form of a song, Deut. xxxii.; that Nathan coming to David upon an harsh errand, begins it with a parable, 2 Sam. xii.; finally, that St Paul, rebuking the faction of the Corinthians, transfers it in a figure to himself, 1 Cor. iv. 6; and accordingly here St John useth the first person, 'If we say,' &c.

Having thus taken a survey of this *room* at large, come we now to the several *partitions* contained in it.

\* Vide Œcumcn. in loc.



And there are three things which our apostle discovereth in this reprehension concerning these hypocrites.

The impiety of their practice, they 'walk in darkness.'

The eminency of their profession, they 'say they have fellowship with God.'

The incongruity of their profession to their practice, 'they lie,' and their practice to their profession, 'they do not the truth.'

These are the three paths through which my discourse, and your attention, must walk, beseeching God for the light of his Holy Spirit, that I may speak, you may hear, all of us may do the truth, and so none of us come under the censure of the text, for walking in darkness, and not doing the truth.

1. The impiety of their practice is that which is described by that metaphorical phrase, of 'walking in darkness;' for the right understanding whereof, we shall take a short view of both the metaphors, to wit, *darkness* and *walking*, there being in both an emphatical significancy.

(1.) For the better illustrating of this term darkness, be pleased to take notice that there is a fourfold darkness, namely, *natura*, *ignorantia*, *miseria*, *nequitia*, of nature, of ignorance, of misery, and of iniquity.

[1.] Darkness of *nature* (properly and literally so called) is the absence of light. When the sun taketh its leave of our horizon, and all things are enveloped in the sable mantle of the night, then we justly say it is dark. Of this darkness Moses speaketh, Gen. i. 18, when he sayeth, 'God made two great lights, to divide the light from the darkness;' and this was the curse Job wished upon the day wherein he was born, Job iii. 4, that it might be darkness.

[2.] Darkness, when used in a borrowed sense, serveth to represent in Scripture a state of *ignorance* in divine matters, when the mind is destitute of spiritual knowledge, unacquainted with the mysteries of salvation. What is it but, as it were, wrapped up in darkness? In this darkness the Gentiles, before the coming of Christ, are said to sit, Luke i. 77; and, in this respect, the Ephesians are said to be 'sometimes darkness,' Eph. v. 8, to wit, in their unregeneracy.

[3.] Of *miseria*, and that of all sorts, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

When the palmist speaketh of some who 'sit in darkness,' Ps. cvii. 10, he presently explaineth himself of those who are 'bound in affliction'; and more especially, when Job speaketh of a 'land of darkness,' Job x. 22; he manifestly intendeth the grave, and its forerunner, death, the last, but not the least, nay, the greatest of all temporal evils.

When the prophet Isaiah mentioneth one that feareth the Lord and obeyeth his voice 'walking in darkness and seeing no light,' Isa. l. 10, no doubt he is principally to be understood of the darkness of spiritual desertion, when God withholdeth the light of his countenance from the soul.

Finally, when we frequently read in the New Testament of 'utter darkness,' Mat. xxii. 13, the 'mist of darkness,' 2 Pet. ii. 17, 'blackness of darkness,' Jude 13, what else do those phrases mean but the damned's everlasting misery, in being wholly deprived of the beatifical vision.

[4.] Of *iniquity*. In this respect it is that the power of sin ruling in men's hearts, is called 'the power of darkness,' Col. i. 12; and the works of sin which they act in their lives, are called the 'works of darkness,' Eph. v. 11, especially flagitious enormities, such as 'rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying,' which are enumerated by the apostle as the 'works of darkness,' Rom. xiii. 12, 13. If you ask in which of these acceptations it is here to be construed, some interpreters\* answer, in two of them, namely, for ignorance and iniquity; but, doubtless more suitably, the latter is to be understood, namely, sin and wickedness; and chiefly, gross notorious sins, because the apostle speaketh of the conversation. The darkness of ignorance is that in which men are said to sit; but that in which they walk is most congruously construed to be the darkness of sin.

And indeed so truly, nay, fully, doth this term of darkness agree to sin, that it taketh in all the other acceptations under some notion or other, each of which may serve as a several reason why this appellation of darkness is given to it.

1. Sin hath relation to the darkness of nature, as a concomitant which it most delights in. Most sins are such as fly the light, and love to be covered over with night's canopy. St Paul saith of drunkards, that they are 'drunk in the night,' 1 Thes. v. 5; and Solomon of the young man, that 'he goeth to the harlot's house in the evening, in the black and dark night,' Prov. vii. 9; and Job of the adulterer, the thief, the murderer, that they 'rebel against the light, and the morning is to them even as the shadow of death,' Job xxiv. 13-17. To this purpose it is that Clemens Alexandrinus† observeth of the Carpocratians, that they appointed their meetings in the night. Indeed, the night being a cover to wickedness, maketh men secure and shameless,‡ in committing it; no marvel if they make choice of that time, and their works are therefore deservedly called the works of darkness, because acted in the night.

2. Sin hath relation to the darkness of ignorance, both as an effect and as a cause, in which respect it is called by Dionysius, obscure wickedness, Ἀλαμπης κακία.§

(1.) No sin is committed but the judgment is first infatuated, and therefore it is the wise man's question, 'Do not they err, that devise mischief?' Prov. xiv. 22;

\* In tenebris ambulare est versari in ignorantia et peccato.—*Lor. in loc. Vide Œcumen. ibid.*

† Cl. Al. Strom. l. 3.

‡ Nox et amor vinumque nihil moderabile suadent.—*Ovid.*

§ Dionys. de cælest. Hier.



and the philosopher's assertion,\* Every offender erreth. There is upon the heart of every sinner, *atra nubis, cæca nox* (to use the poet's expression), a black cloud, a dark night, which causeth him to wander, and the blindness of our mind is that which misguideth our feet, in which respect sin is an effect.

(2.) The commission of sin, as it hardeneth the heart, so it blindeth the mind. What mists, and fogs, and clouds are to the air, that are corrupt affections and flagitious actions to the soul, darkening and obscuring whatever light of knowledge shineth in it. In this notion we may very well understand that of the wise man, Prov. iv. 9, when he saith, 'the way of the wicked is as darkness,' the darkness of ignorance increasing upon men, as they go on in sinful ways; and in this respect sin is as a cause, and because sins are caused by, and withal are the causes of, darkness and ignorance in the mind, very fitly is this brand of darkness set upon it.

3. Sin hath reference to the darkness of misery as a cause, and that in its full latitude. 'Wherefore doth the living man complain?' (saith the church, Lam. iii. 40, in respect of temporal afflictions) 'Man suffereth for the punishment of his sin,' all the miseries of life; yea, death itself, being the bitter fruits of sin, for so the apostle saith expressly, Rom. v. 12, 'death entered into the world by sin.' It is the interposition of sin between God and us that eclipseth his loving-kindness towards us; so saith the prophet Isaiah, chap. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.† Finally, it is wickedness that brings eternal wretchedness, that being the doom denounced by our blessed Saviour against the wicked servant: 'Cast him into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' Mat. xxv. 30; so that in this respect is sin most justly called darkness, because it brings so great a darkness of sorrow and calamity upon the sinner. And thus I have given a despatch to the first of these metaphors.

2. The other, of *walking*, is no less considerable, a word that is very frequently used in Scripture, and that to signify in general a course of life.‡ Indeed, what is our life but a walk, and all the actions of our life as so many steps? And as walking in a way leadeth to some place or other, so doth the course of every man's life tend to some end, either of felicity or misery. To this purpose is that metaphor of sowing, which we so often meet with in holy writ, because sowing bringeth forth some harvest or other, according to the seed that is sown. And I would to God that all men might hence learn so to look upon themselves as sowers, as travellers, and therefore to make choice of their seed,

\* Aristot. Eth.

† Noli cadere in peccatum, et non tibi occidet hic sol; si tu feceris casum, tibi faciet oceanum.—Aug. tract. 2. in John.

‡ Ambulandi verbum latè patet et accipitur pro vitæ ratione.—Lor. in loc.

and take heed to their ways. More particularly this word is used, both in respect of a good and an evil course of life; and an instance of both we have in this and the next verse. There it is applied to a godly, and here to a wicked, conversation.

That, then, which we are now to inquire into is, what this phrase of walking imports, concerning a state of sinful living; the answer to which will appear by taking notice of three properties in the motion of walking, as being *motus voluntarius, continuus et progressivus*, a voluntary, constant, and a progressive motion.

1. Walking is a *voluntary* motion. It is one thing to be drawn, and another thing to go; the one is an act of violence, the other of voluntariness. Walking is a free, willing act, so willing that it is an act of choice, and is never done but upon a preceding deliberate resolution; nor is it only voluntary, but delightful. Running is painful, but walking a pleasant motion, and it is a great deal of content and pleasure men take in walking.\* All this representeth the temper of wicked men, who not only act sin, but affect it. A good man may be sometimes drawn into sin, but had men walk in it; yea, as Solomon's expression is, Prov. ii. 13, 14, 'They leave the path of uprightness to walk in the way of darkness.' Hence it is that (as it there followeth), 'they rejoice to do evil, and the ways of sin are pleasant to them.' For this reason no doubt it is, that the acting of sin is compared to eating, Prov. iv. 17, and drinking, Job xv. 16, and sleeping, Eph. v. 14, as well as to walking. Nor doth the hungry man take more delight in eating, the thirsty in drinking, the weary in sleeping, than the wicked man doth in sinning.

2. Walking is a *continued* motion, an iteration of many steps one after another. This intimateth the most characterising property of a wicked man. He is one who repeateth and multiplieth sinful actions; the eup of iniquity is never from his mouth, his imaginations are only evil, and that continually; the special bent of his heart, and the general current of his life, is vile and wicked. 'I have spread out my hands all the day,' saith almighty God, 'unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that is not good,' Isa. lxxv. 2. The length of God's patience argueth the continuance of their provocations; and to note this, it is expressed by the phrase of walking. It is one thing for a man to fall, and another to lie; one thing to step, and another to walk in any way. The moralist saith truly, *una actio non denominat*, any one evil action denominateth a man a sinner, but not wicked. Men, good men, may sometimes step into an evil way; he only is to be adjudged bad who frequently reneweth his sins, and maketh it his constant practice to do iniquity.

3. Walking is a *progressive* motion, wherein we set

\* Ambulandi verbum indicat defendendam delectationem.—Id. *ibid.*

one foot before another, and so are still going forward till we come to our journey's end. And this is a fit emblem of a wicked disposition, which still addeth sin to sin, and groweth from bad to worse.\* The prophet Jeremiah, chap. ix. 3, 5, saith of the wicked, they 'proceed from evil to evil;' and again, 'they weary themselves to commit iniquity;' they walk so long till they are weary,† and when they are weary they will not give over walking. St Paul saith concerning heretics, 2 Tim. iii. 13, 'they wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;' indeed, wicked men never come to their *maximum quod sic*, in sinful growths. Sin, like the sea, never will set bounds to itself.‡ This dark walk is a descent wherein men go lower and lower, never staying of themselves till they come to the bottom. And as in walking a man is every step further off the term from which, and nearer to the term to which, he moveth, so sinners every day go further and further off from God, and draw nearer and nearer to the suburbs of hell.

By this time I doubt not but the meaning of this clause appeareth; and if we look upon those whom our apostle may be probably supposed here principally to intend, to wit, the Gnostics, we shall find this fully verified concerning them. They were a sort of people that did constantly wallow in notorious wickedness, and counted it pleasure to live in all manner of impiety. Epiphanius, writing of them, saith,§ it loathed him to delineate what darkness of wickedness they lived in, and I tremble to mention what he there relateth concerning their impure and flagitious practices; in which respect it was that (as both he and St Austin|| observe) they were among other names called *Borborigæ*, the signification of that name being fully verified in them, who were a generation of filthy, unclean persons. And as this was in a very high degree to be charged upon them, so is it more or less true of all wicked and ungodly persons. Wickedness is their way, darkness is their walk, in which they willingly give themselves up to a course of sin in some kind or other.

To apply this, what other use should we make of this part than that which the church exhorteth to? Let us search and try our ways, Lam. iii. 40. And oh that every one of us would deal impartially with ourselves, and pass a right censure upon our own condition, according to this description! It is a sad truth, εαυτον ουδεις ομολογει κακούργος ειν, no man will acknowledge himself wicked though he be so. We willingly accuse ourselves to be sinners, but we would excuse ourselves from being wicked. But, alas! what will it avail us not to think ourselves so, if yet in truth we be so? Oh therefore let us bring ourselves

\* Ambulare, i. e. de malo in pejus proficere.—Aquin.

† Ambulare est ulterius tendere et peccato peccatis cumulare.—Serrac.

‡ Quis peccandi finem sibi posuit.—Horat.

§ Epiph. Adv. bar. i. 1, t. iii.

|| Aug. de Hæres.

to the test, and faithfully examine whether we do not walk in darkness! Set thyself, O sinner, in the presence of God, and ask thy conscience this question, Is there no work of darkness that I delight in? Is there no way of darkness that I constantly go on in? Is there no sinful practice that I allow myself in? Perhaps, O sinner, thou dost not walk in chambering and wantonness. Ay, but dost thou not walk in strife and envying? Is there not some deed of darkness or other to which thou art addicted, with which thou art enamoured, and from which thou wilt not be diverted?

And now if, upon diligent inquiry, thy conscience accuse thee, and thine own heart condemn thee, oh then be further (and that even from this very expression) convinced of thy deplorable and miserable estate. *Lugere* (say etymologists) is *quasi luce egere*; surely we have great reason to mourn over ourselves, because we walk in darkness. One of the plagues of Egypt was a thick darkness; it is the plague of all wicked men. Oh that they were sensible of it! And if you please a little further to trace the metaphor, you shall find this phrase of walking in darkness to denote as well the calamity as the iniquity of transgressors.

There are three no less sad than common attendants on walking in darkness, *casus*, *error*, *terror*, falling, wandering, trembling, all which are in a spiritual sense sadly true of ungodly sinners.

1. Darkness is *casus inductiva*, apt to cause stumbling and falling. These two are joined together by the psalmist in his curse, 'Let their way be dark and slippery.' In the dark, men stumble at every stone, fall into many a pit, so that many have lost their limbs, nay, lives, by walking in darkness. Thus do wicked men, by walking in sin, wound their consciences, hazard their souls, whilst their table becometh a snare, everything they enjoy a stumbling-block, and they are continually ready to fall into the pit of perdition.

2. Darkness is *erroris productiva*, apt to make men wander and lose their way. How many hath the night enclosed within some desolate wood, exposed to cold and rain upon some spacious heath, whilst, missing the right path, they have not known whither to go. Thus do wicked men, walking in the dark, miss their way to bliss, and wander up and down in folly. In this respect the psalmist saith of them, Ps. xiv. 2, 'they are all gone out of the way,' and the prophet, Isa. liii. 6, compareth them to stray sheep.

3. Darkness is *timoris incussiva*, that which maketh men prone to fears and terrors. In the dark, a man is in continual fear of some danger or other to befall him, because he cannot see his way; nay, he is apt to fall into panic fears, whilst every bush is in his fancy a thief, and the least noise causeth a commotion in his breast. Thus is it with wicked men many times; 'they fear' (according to the psalmist's expression)



'where no fear is;' though withal the truth is, they have always real cause of fear, in respect of the danger that deservedly hangs over their heads. Indeed, as men in the dark, sometime not seeing, fear not the peril which they are very near to, so wicked men, being secure, are fearless; and not considering what they deserve, fear not till they come to feel. But when once their sleepy conscience is awakened, oh what horrid fears, perplexing terrors, invade them, whilst the cloud of vengeance is ready every moment to rain fire, hail, and brimstone upon them.

To end all, what now remaineth but that this discourse of darkness serve as a light to discover to you where you are, what you do, and whither you are going; that so being enlightened to see your utter darkness, you may walk no further, but with incessant cries beseech him who is the 'Father of lights,' that he would send his Spirit to pluck you out of Sodom, and by his mighty working 'deliver you from the power of darkness, and translate you into the kingdom of his dear Son.' Amen.

## SERMON XI.

*If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*—1 JOHN I. 6.

THAT preface which I find in the beginning of one of Salvian's books concerning God's government of the world, I may here aptly make use of.\* I suppose, yea, I am confident, my discourse of this scripture will be unwelcome to many auditors, and that because it is a smart and sharp reprehension. Men naturally love to be tickled with applause, not scratched with reproof. We relish well the honey of commendation, but know not how to digest the wormwood of increpation. But, beloved, the diet which is not so toothsome may be wholesome; that potion which is very bitter to the taste may prove healthful to the body; and faithful rebukes, though they be not so pleasing, yet I am sure are profitable, especially when they are seasonable and suitable, such as this was to those in St John's time; and I would to God it were not as truly agreeing to many, very many, in our days, who will be found one day among the number of those liars. 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.'

Having already despatched the impiety of those men's practice, in that they walk in darkness, that which followeth next in order is the eminency of their profession, implied in that supposition, 'If we say we have fellowship with him,' for in this supposition there is a position couched, namely,

That many who walk in darkness say they have fellowship with God.

For the better explication of which, in its fullest latitude, I shall briefly premise a double distinction, and then pursue a double proposition.

The distinctions to be premised are of,

1. A double having this fellowship, to wit, *in spe* and *in re*, in a confident expectation and in a real possession.

2. A double saying we have it, namely, a saying within ourselves, and a saying to others; that is inward in respect of our thought and opinion, this out-

ward in respect most properly of our words, and not excluding gestures, and all other ways of external expression.

The propositions to be prosecuted are two.

1. Many say they have fellowship with God in hope, who yet walk in darkness; they promise to themselves the future vision of God's face, whilst they go on in the wilful breach of God's law. This is that which they say in their hearts, persuading themselves that their condition shall be happy, though their conversation is wicked. Of such an one it is Moses speaketh, who 'blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of my own heart,' Deut. xxix. 19. This is that they say with their lips, impudently laying as full claim to happiness as the uprightest and exactest saint.

If you inquire whence this comes to pass, I answer, from the false reasonings which are in the minds of men, concerning

The freeness of God's grace in electing;

The fulness of his mercy in forgiving;

The worthiness of Christ's blood in redeeming.

1. When presumptuous sinners hear that God's election is without respect to any worthiness or qualifications in us, they presently fancy to themselves that their names may be written in the book of life as well as any other; yea, they fondly imagine that, being elected, they shall have fellowship with God, let them live as they list; and hence they are emboldened to presume and boast of a future well-being, not considering that God's election, though it be not conditional, yet is ordinate, to wit, to the end by the means, to happiness by holiness.

2. When wicked men look upon the extent of God's mercy, whereby it is that he 'desireth not the death of a sinner,' that he is a 'God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin,' not only few but many, small but great, all sorts of sin, they promise to themselves a facility of obtaining forgiveness, whilst yet they indulge to their sins, not considering that God is just as well as merciful, righteous as well as gracious, and

\* Arbitror, imo certus sum, &c.—*Salv. de Gub. Dei*, l. viii.

he is ready to pardon the penitent, so he will by no means clear the guilty.

3. Finally, when secure sinners hear of the infinite merit of Christ's blood, how satisfactory it is for the sins of the whole world, and therefore much more of a particular person, they are willing to persuade themselves of an interest in that blood, and thereby of reconciliation and fellowship with God, not considering what our apostle saith in the very next verse, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; but it is only those who walk in the light.

Thus is the sweetest honey turned into gall by bad stomachs, the most wholesome antidotes become poison to wicked men, and the precious supports of a lively faith are abused to be props of presumption by arrogant hypocrites; by reason whereof it is that they are so impudent as to say, they hope to have fellowship with God, though they walk in darkness.

2. Many who walk in darkness say they have actually this divine fellowship, and are in a state of grace. As for the grossest sort of hypocrites, who make pretences of religion and holiness a cover of their wickedness, they cannot say in their hearts, because their consciences must needs tell them they are wicked and odious in God's sight; but they say it to the world, that they may walk in the dark, and accomplish their wicked designs the more secretly, speedily, and effectually. But as for others, they say it both in opinion and profession, they think, and accordingly boast themselves, to have communion with God, though they walk in the darkness, both of sin and error.

Instances of this nature there want not many in all times of the church. The prophet Isaiah speaketh of the Israelites in his time, that they did 'swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. They call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel,' Isa. xlvi. 1, 2. And again, God himself, concerning the people, saith, Isa. lviii. 1, 2, that, notwithstanding their transgressions and sins, in which they lived, 'they would seek him daily, as a nation that did righteousness, yea, that they took delight in approaching to God;' and what was this, but to say they had fellowship with him? Of this sort were the Pharisees in John the Baptist's time, Mat. iii. 7, 9, though they were a 'generation of vipers,' yet they would 'say within themselves, they had Abraham to their father,' and so in effect, that God was their God. Such were those in Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 9, of the 'synagogue of Satan,' and yet they said 'they were Jews,' the people in covenant with God. Against this generation of men it is that St Paul declaimeth, where he saith, 'they have a form of godliness,' by which they say we have fellowship with God, and yet 'deny the power of it,' 2 Tim. iii. 5, to wit, by walking in darkness; and again, they profess they know God, and so have communion with him, whilst in their works they deny him, Tit. i. 16,

by walking in darkness. Indeed, so far hath the presumption of some carried them, that, though they were impure heretics, and at once, both in respect of doctrine and manners, walked in darkness, yet they have said, not only that they had fellowship with God, but that they were the only people that had fellowship with him. This did the Gnostics (a people, as you have already heard, that lived in all manner of impurity) pretend, that they only were the people who had the knowledge of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, and therefore gave themselves that title. Such was Novatian with his followers, whom St Cyprian compareth to an ape, dissembling itself to be a man,\* because, being an enemy against, he assumed to himself the authority and verity of the catholic church. Not to expatiate in this large field, at this day, on the one hand, the papists appropriate to themselves the title of catholics, assert theirs the only true church, wherein alone fellowship with God is to be had, and out of which there is no salvation to be obtained, and yet they walk in the darkness of idolatry, superstition, and impieties; and on the other hand, the schismatics among ourselves account themselves the only saints, the pure churches, those that alone have communion with God in pure ordinances, whilst their pride and arrogance, malice and oppression, cruelty and bloodshed, sedition and rebellion, testify to their faces that they walk in darkness.

To apply this. All then is not gold that glistereth, nor are fair shows a sufficient argument of reality. The truth is, there are many sincere-hearted Christians, who make conscience of their ways, and walk in the light, that have not so far attained as to say they have, and hope for fellowship with God, being very jealous and timorous about their spiritual and eternal state. And yet many base hypocritical wretches, who indulge to themselves in known wickedness, are strongly confident of felicity, yea, make large professions of piety. Take heed, therefore, how you give credit to pretences; esteem not a pharisee the holier for the breadth of his phylacteries or depth of his fringes; every man is not presently a scholar that weareth black, nor a gentleman that is arrayed in scarlet, nor a Christian, that is so in name and profession. Well-meaning persons think all men speak as they mean, and are as they seem, but the wise man tells us it is the 'simple who believeth every word,' Prov. xiv. 15. Indeed, because many who walk in darkness say they have fellowship with God, to infer all who say they have fellowship with God walk in darkness, would argue too little charity. But to conclude that all who say they have fellowship with God, have so indeed, argueth too much credulity. It is true, if I know not a man's conversation, charity bids me think well of his profession, and hope well of his hopes; but withal prudence adviseth me, that I be not presently drawn aside with

\* Cypr. ep. 73.



smooth words and fair pretences. The sum is, neither rashly censure, nor yet hastily credit, them who say they have fellowship with God, lest as by the one you may condemn the good, so by the other you may believe a liar; for if they who walk in darkness say it, they lie. And so I am fallen on the last and main part of this Scripture.

The incongruity of these two, the hypocrite's profession and practice one to the other: 'they lie, and do not the truth.'

Here are two characters given of these hypocrites, the one affirmative, the other negative; the one of lying, the other of not doing the truth. Aquinas conceiveth by these two a double sin charged upon them,\* the one of commission in speaking a lie, the other of omission in not doing the truth. Aretius† better refers the lie to their sayings, the not doing the truth to their walking; therefore their saying is a lie, because their walking in darkness is a not doing the truth, and so the latter is added by way both of explication and confirmation to the former.

1. Begin we with the affirmative expression, and therein inquire how this saying appeareth to be a lie.

To which end be pleased to know, that there are two things considerable in a lie, to wit, the material and the formal part. The matter of a lie is a falsehood, the form of it is an intentional asserting it to be true.

1. As to the first of these, *we lie* is as much as we say that which is false. Indeed, every falsehood is not a lie, but in every lie there is a falsehood. It is true a man may tell a lie, and yet speak truth; but it is then when he thinketh it to be false; and commonly the matter of a lie is that which is false in the nature of the thing.

Such is the matter of this saying in the text, that a man who walketh in darkness hath fellowship with God. I grant a man who hath fellowship with God may fall into darkness, do some particuliar work of darkness, but he cannot walk in it. It is not to be denied but that a man who doth walk in darkness, by changing his course, may come to have fellowship with God; and a man that now hath fellowship with God may be one that hath walked in darkness; but to say that he who *doth* walk in darkness *hath* fellowship with God, is materially a lie,‡ because a notorious falsehood. That this may more fully appear, consider this double demonstration.

(1.) That saying which is not according to, nay, directly against, the saying of God, must needs be a lie; for if God be the God of truth, his must needs be the word of truth; and so, whatsoever is dissonant to it, false and lying. Now, beloved, search if you please the whole volume of sacred writ, from the beginning

\* *Mentimur, ecco peccatum commissionis; non facimus veritatem, ecco peccatum omissionis*.—*Aquin in loc.*

† *Mentimur refertur ad professionem, non facere veritatem ad mores*.—*Aret. ibid.*

‡ *Recet presentis temporis verbum ponitur*.—*Lor. ibid.*

of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse, and find if you can any leaf in that book, or any line in those leaves, that speaketh the least word of peace, or pardon, or comfort, or mercy from God to a man that walketh in darkness, liveth in wickedness; nay, indeed, God hath written a bill of divorce to every such person, *Non est tibi pars neque sors*, as the apostle said to Simon Magus: Acts viii. 21, 'Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter' of divine fellowship, who walketh in sinful courses. 'The Lord is far from the wicked,' Prov. xv. 29; the 'wicked is an abomination to the Lord,' Prov. xvii. 15; 'There is no peace, saith God, to the wicked,' Isa. lvii. 21; 'God will wound the hairy scalp of him that goeth on in his wickedness,' Ps. lxxviii. 21; 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity,' Mat. vii. 23: this is the language which the Holy Ghost useth, and the doom which the Scriptures passeth on such a person; and now tell me, can there be a more palpable untruth, than when God sayeth *no peace*, for men to say *peace*, and for them to whom God saith *depart*, to say they have fellowship with him?

(2.) To say that is, which not only is not, but cannot be, is a lying falsehood. Who would not account him a liar that should assert a thing actually existing, which is not only improbable but impossible? Now for a man walking in darkness to have fellowship with God, is altogether impossible, and the reason is clear in the context; read but the end of the former verse with this, and the inconsistency will be manifest, because 'God is light, and no darkness is in him;' therefore they who walk in darkness cannot have fellowship with him. For as St Paul puts the question, intending by it a vehement negation: 2 Cor. vi. 14, 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?' We see in experience the darkness cometh not till the light be gone; when the light cometh the darkness vanisheth, they cannot dwell together; and the ground of it is clear in philosophy, because things of a contrary nature do *mutuo se tollere*, mutually take away each other. Indeed, contrary qualities may in remiss degrees consist in the same subject, but not in intense; and when they do, it is with them as with a pair of scales: if one go up, the other goeth down; as one increaseth, the other decreaseth. Now God is not only lightsome, but light, and such a light as is without the least darkness, light in the abstract, and that noteth the brightest lustre; whereas the wicked man walketh in darkness, yea, according to St Paul's phrase concerning the Ephesians, chap. v. 6, he is darkness in the abstract, and that noteth the utmost darkness. As soon, then, may the clearest light and the thickest darkness rest in the same place together, as God and a wicked man have fellowship together. Michael and the dragon could not agree in one heaven, nor the ark and Dagon in one house, nor Esau and Jacob in one womb; no more can God and a wicked man agree. A silly old hermit was sorry that God

and the devil should be at odds, and would undertake to make them friends; but the devil bids him spare his labour, for they were everlastingly fallen out. Indeed, God and a wicked man are not so, there is a possibility of reconciliation, but not whilst he so continueth. You may as easily believe that fire and water, peace and war, purity and filthiness, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, happiness and misery, light and darkness, can be made friends, as that God can be at one with him who goeth on in his sins.

By reason of this contrariety between God and a wicked man it is, that as God hateth the wicked, so the wicked hateth God. Darkness doth not with more celerity fly from the light, than unrighteousness from God, so that it is impossible not only for this fellowship to be, but to be so much as desired. It is true many wicked men desire to go to heaven; but it is because they are mistaken in their imaginations about heaven. They look upon it as a place of felicity, but not of sanctity; they only fancy it a place of pleasure and contentment, but consider not that the pleasure is in fellowship with a pure and holy God. Alas! the society of a godly man is a burden, a terror to the wicked: he cannot be merry so long as he is in his company. What, then, will be the fellowship of an holy God? Upon which account I may truly say, that if God should let a wicked man into heaven, heaven would be an hell, and that divine fellowship a torment to him.

By this time I doubt not, but you see the truth of the falsehood, written as it were with a sunbeam,\* and what just cause St John hath to give them the lie, who, walking in darkness, say they have fellowship with God, there being a plain untruth in it, which is the material part of a lie.

2. But, further, in a lie not only the matter, but the form of it, is to be considered. This by the most is made an intention to deceive,† for so the definition usually runs; nor is it to be denied but that this is *consecutivè*, an essential property of, and so annexed to every lie; yet if we speak of that which is *constitutivè*, the essential form of a lie, it is the intention of asserting a known falsehood; so that to lie in its proper notion is for a man to affirm or deny intentionally that which he knoweth to be contrary.

If we apply this to the business in hand, it is only to be charged properly on the grossest hypocrites, who, against the inward verdict of their own consciences, say this openly to men, that they have fellowship with God; yea, which maketh them perfect liars, they say this on purpose to deceive and cheat the purblind world, that they may seem to others what they know they are not; it is that which one aptly calls not only dipped but double dipped hypocrisy.

And yet, inasmuch as the falsehood of this proposi-

tion is so evident, that whosoever will make use of his reason must acknowledge it, it followeth that even they who may, in saying this, speak what they think, are interpretatively liars. If a man shall wilfully shut his eyes, and say the sun shineth not, would you account him any whit excusable for his not seeing, or rather would you not adjudge him to tell a voluntary lie? The same is the case here. All who assert this, are, to use St Peter's phrase, 2 Peter iii. 5, 'willingly ignorant;' they cannot but know, and yet they will not know, the falsehood of it, which, being an affected ignorance, is so far from excusing, that it rather aggravateth; and, therefore, this brand of a liar most justly rests on every one who, walking in darkness, saith he hath fellowship with God.

And so much for the affirmative expression; pass we on to the negative, in these words, 'and do not the truth.' This phrase of doing the truth is very rare. I find it not used in the New Testament, but only by the Master and the beloved disciple. It is Christ's phrase in his speech to Nicodemus, 'He that doth the truth cometh to the light,' John iii. 21; and here St John, having learned it from him, maketh use of it, we 'do not the truth.'

An expression which at first view seemeth harsh and incongruous, since truth more properly refers to the judgment than the life, and is the object rather of contemplation than action. Hence it is, that *truth* is that which we are said to *know* and *believe*, and that which we are said to *do* is *good*; and this is the most usual phrase of the Scripture.

But if we look a little more narrowly into this expression, it will appear apt and significant; to which end we must know, that, according to the philosophers, there is a threefold truth, metaphysical, logical, and ethical, *veritas in essendo, cognoscendo, significando*: the first is in being the conformity of a thing to the idea by which it was framed; the second is in knowing the conformity of the understanding with the thing; the third is in signifying the conformity, both *sermonis* and *facti*, of our words to the things, and our actions to right reason; by which distinction it manifestly appeareth that there is a practical as well as a speculative truth, and so this phrase of doing the truth [is] very suitable.

To open it a little more fully, be pleased to know that doing the truth may be construed two ways, and both here be made use of, to wit, by considering truth either as the object, or the manner of this doing.

1. To do the truth, considered objectively, is to conform in doing to the truth, that is, the word of God, the rule and square of truth; and so this phrase may be expounded by that of Ezekiel, 'doing that which is lawful and right,' Ezek. xviii. 5. To this purpose is the exposition which St Cyril and Tollet give of the phrase in the Gospel. To do the truth, is to do according to the law of justice, rightly and honestly,\*

\* *Facere veritatem est operari secundum legem justitiae, rec-*

\* Vide Aug. l. de mendac. cap. 42.

† *Voluntas fallendi pertinet ad perfectionem mendacii, &c. —Regn. de mend.*



to make the law of God the rule of our conversation, whereby we may become acceptable to God.

2. To do the truth, considered modally, is to do what we do heartily, sincerely; and so it may be explained by Hezekiah's phrase, Isa. xxxviii. 2, of 'walking in truth, and with a perfect heart;' for as to doing good, it is not enough that we do what is good, but that we do it well; so to doing the truth, it is not sufficient that we do what is right, but that we do it truly, with a good and upright heart.\* And no wonder if our apostle here, declaiming against hypocrites, whose devotion is but a stage-play, a mere feigned representation, and whose conversation is after their own lusts, not God's ways, chargeth them that they do not the truth.

But if we put these two expressions together, 'we lie, and do not the truth,' there may seem yet a further incongruity. It would have been more suitable, one would think, to have said, we lie and speak not the truth, since lying refers to the tongue, and so this would have been fitly annexed as a proof of the lying, in that they speak not truth; but if we consider upon what account the apostle chargeth these hypocrites with lying, we shall find this phrase was fitly made choice of, *not doing*, rather than *not speaking* truth. The reason why this saying is asserted to be a lie, is because their walking was not answerable to their talking, their doing to their saying; no wonder that he saith they lie, and that is because they do not the truth.

To clear this more plainly, you must know that, though in a strict and proper sense, a lie is the dissonancy between the tongue and the heart, the words and the thoughts, when a man speaketh one thing and thinketh another, yet in a large and no less real notion it is a dissonancy between the tongue and the hand, the words and the works, when a man speaketh one thing and doth another. To this purpose St Ambrose excellently noteth, † that there is a lie as well in respect of deeds as words. For a man to call himself a Christian, and not to do the work of Christ, is a lie; and thus Estius glosseth on these words, † 'We do not the truth; that is, we prove by our deeds, that what we say is not true.' Indeed, they are alike bad when the life, as when the heart, giveth the tongue the lie, nay, in respect of men, the former is far more discernible than the latter. When a man speaketh what his heart thinketh not, I cannot presently say he lieth, because I know not what he thinketh; but when a man speaketh that which his actions confute, I can easily see and boldly say that he lieth.

titudinis et honestatis.—*Tolet in John.* Vide Cyr. Alex. in John, cap. iii.

\* *Facere veritatem nihil aliud est quam sincerè agere.—Forst. in loc.*

† Non solum in falsis verbis sed in simulatis operibus mendacium est. Christianum se dicere et opera Christi non facere mendacium est.—*Ambr. Serm. de Abrah.*

‡ Non facimus veritatem, i. e. factò non probamus verum esse quod verbo aut cogitatione loquimur.—*Est. in loc.*

That, then, which our apostle would intimate to us by this phrase is, the contrariety between a hypocrite's profession and his conversation. His voice is Jacob's, but his hands are Esau's; like silver, he looks white, but draweth black lines, *audi, nemo melius, specta, nemo pejus, loquitur ut Piso, venit ut Gallonus.* Hear him talking, you would think him an angel; see him walking, you will find him a devil. Like that stage-player who cried *O cælum*, and pointed with his finger to the earth, his tongue talketh of heaven, whilst his fingers are defiled with the earth; he speaketh much of the Spirit, but he walketh after the flesh; the discourse of his lips is holy, the course of his life profane. In a word, his profession is angelical, his conversation diabolical; his words are spiritual, his works carnal; he saith he hath fellowship with God, but he lieth, for he doth not the truth.

To apply this. When I read this text, and consider the times, I am ready to believe that the one was in a special manner intended for the other, so fully is this charge of lying verified in this generation. It was the complaint of God by the prophet, Hosea xi. 12, 'Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit;' may he not take up the same against us? England compasseth God about with lies, and London with deceit. Let our ungodly, abominable, unjust practices speak, if our fastings, and prayers, and profession, be not a loud notorious lie.

Oh that I could cry aloud this day, in the ears of these liars, to awaken them out of their security! 'Trust not in lying words,' was the caution of the prophet to the Jews, Jer. vii. 4; it is no less needful for us. Let us not content ourselves with false shows, nor rest on vain hopes. It was the charge of the prophet against the people concerning their king, Hosea vii. 3, that they 'made him glad with lies;' and what else do hypocrites, whilst [they] make themselves glad with false presumption? Oh that this lying generation would sadly consider what a kind of lie this is whereof they are guilty! The schools distinguish of three kinds of lies,\* according to the several ends at which they aim: to wit, *jesting*, for mirth and pleasure; *officious*, for profit and advantage; *pernicious*, tending to injury and hurt. All of these are condemned; but the latter is justly accounted the most abominable, and of this sort is the lie my text speaketh of, a pernicious, hurtful lie.

That you may see the injury which cometh by it, consider it in reference to God and his gospel, to others, and to ourselves.

1. To say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, is such a lie as tendeth much to the dishonour of God and disgrace of religion. St Paul, speaking to the hypocritical Jews, tells them, Rom. ii. 24, 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.' The like may be said to licen-

\* Triplex mendacium, jocosum, officiosum, perniciosum.

tious Christians, the name of God is blasphemed among Turks and pagans through you.\* When the Indians were so barbarously used by the Spaniards, who called themselves Christians, they cried out, *Quis (malum) Deus iste*, What god do these men serve? When the enemies of the reformed church hear what perjury, oppression, bloodshed, they who would pretend to the strictest profession of it commit, are they not ready to say, What a religion is it these men profess, that can dispense with such wickedness! It was no small (though a just) disgrace to the pope, when the king of Hungary, having taken a bishop prisoner in battle, sent his armour to him, and only this in writing, *Vide num hæc sit vestis filii tui*, Is this your son's coat? And it is a sad (though unjust) reproach, which the bad lives of Christians cause to fall on God himself, whilst profane wretches are apt to say, These are your saints! and thus, by our wicked conversation, our being called Christians brings a reproach to Christ and Christianity.

2. Besides this (which is the highest) injury to religion, it is hurtful to others, when they who pretend to have communion with God lead wicked lives. How are strong Christians grieved, the weak staggered, and they that are without kept back from embracing religion, yea, encouraged in their licentious actions! Nay, if these that say they have fellowship with God do such abominable things, what need we trouble ourselves; are profane wretches ready to say; our lives are little worse than theirs, why should not our condition be as good?

3. This lie will prove no less pernicious to ourselves. He who is the eternal truth cannot endure lying lips.† *Vident et rident demones*, devils see and rejoice; God seeth, and is incensed against such dissembling wretches. Every such hypocrite may well think God bespeaketh him in the psalmist's words, Ps. l. 16, 'What hast thou to do to take my name

\* *Ita agimus ac vivimus, ut hoc ipsum, quod Christianus populus esse dicimur, opprobrium Christi esse videatur.—Salv. de Gub. Dei, lib. 4.*

† *Mendaces non fert, qui est æterna veritas.—Qual. in loc.*

into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be reformed, and refusest to receive instruction?' and must expect no other answer at that day, when they may plead their outside devotion and large profession, but 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not,' Mat. vii. 23.

Brethren, you may for a time cozen men, but you cannot deceive God; and as St Cyprian excellently,\* it is a mere madness not to think and know that liars will at last be found out. Diogenes, seeing a vicious young man clad in a philosopher's habit, plucked it off, as conceiving that it was defiled by him; and God will one day pluck off the hypocrite's vizard of piety, that he may appear in his colours; and in that day how far more tolerable will it be for professed enemies of God and religion than for such persons! It is very observable that other sinners are doomed to 'have their portion with hypocrites,' Mat. xxv. 51, as if hypocrites were the tenants, and the rest, as it were, inmates of hell. Certain it is, the furnace of torment shall be seven times hotter for a carnal gospeller, loose professor, than for licentious pagans, since their condemnation shall be so much the greater by how much their profession hath been the holier; and the higher they have lifted themselves up to heaven in their religious pretences, the lower they shall be cast down to hell for their impious practices.

Let, then, every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. It was St Cyprian's advice to those who took on them the name of confessors, that they would keep up the honour of their name; it is mine, to all who take upon them the name of professors. For shame, let us not so palpably give ourselves the lie. *Quid verba audiam, cum facta videam*, what avail good words when our works are bad? *Tace lingua, loquere vita*, either say less or do more. In one word, let our actions speak what our expressions pretend to, and our conversation be answerable to our profession: so shall we be found true men, and not liars; and not only knowers and professors, but doers of the truth, and so be blessed in our deed.

\* *Est vera dementia non cogitare, non scire, quod mendacia non diu fallant.—Cypr. ep. 55.*

## SERMON XII.

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—1 JOHN I. 7.*

**R**IGHTLY to divide the word of truth is the charge St Paul gave to Timothy, and a special part of every minister's office. To give every auditor his due and proper portion, as a master of a feast doth to every guest, is (according to some expositors) the 'right dividing the word of truth,' 2 Tim. ii. 15;\* for which reason no doubt it is that, among other simili-

\* *Vide Est. Lap. ibid.*

tudes, ministers are compared to stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1, whose work is to provide for and distribute to every one in the family their convenient food. What St Paul requireth of all Christians in respect of their neighbours and superiors,—Rom. xiii. 7, 'Render to all men their due: tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour belongeth,'—that by way of analogy is re-



quired of all ministers in regard of their people, to give to every one their due : reproof to whom reproof, threatening to whom threatening, instruction to whom instruction, and comfort to whom comfort appertaineth. A manifest example hereof we have given by this holy apostle in this place, expressly reproofing and implicitly threatening in the former verse those to whom it belongs, such as walk in darkness, and here sweetly comforting those to whom promises belong, such as walk in the light, in this verse, 'But if we walk in the light,' &c. This is that room on the right hand, into which we are now to enter, wherein, if you please, you may take notice of three partitions. Here is the Christian's

Practice, to walk in the light ;

Pattern, as he is in the light ;

Privilege, we have fellowship, &c.

Or if you please to reduce the three to two, here is considerable,

The duty required and the mercy assured ; or

The qualification premised : 'walking in the light as he is in the light.'

The collation promised, of

Communion with God : 'We have fellowship one with another.'

Justification by Christ : 'And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

The first of these is all I can despatch at this time, wherein you may please to observe,

The path, and the guide whom we are to follow.

The walk, and the footsteps which we are to trace.

The matter of the duty, wherein it consists, walking in the light.

The manner of the duty, how it is to be performed, as he is in the light.

Let me crave your patience whilst I shall, by the light of divine truth, lead you through both these.

The matter of the duty which qualifyeth a Christian is said to be walking in the light.

There is a phrase used by St Paul, Rom. xiii. 13, of walking as in the day, which cometh somewhat near this of walking in the light ; and if we should construe light here literally, and prefix an *ως* before in the light, it would excellently instruct us in the nature of a truly Christian conversation.

They who walk in the light walk visibly to the eyes of all beholders, walk carefully, that they may not behave themselves unseemingly, nor do anything which may be offensive.

1. Thus must Christians walk *as in the light*, to wit, exemplarily, according to the counsel of our Saviour, Mat. v. 17, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.' It is not enough to do good works in secret, but we must shew them openly ; and though we must abhor to do our works for this end, that they may be seen, yet we must so do them *as* they may be seen.

2. Exactly ; in such sort as may become the gospel

we believe, and religion we profess. We must walk *εὐσχημένως*, that is St Paul's phrase to the Romans, chap. xiii. 8 ; *honestly*, so our translators ; *decently*, so the sense of the original ; as befits those that call themselves Christians ; *ἀκριβῶς*, that is the apostle's phrase to the Ephesians, chap. v. 15 ; *circumspectly*, so our translators ; *accurately*, so the force of the word ; that we may be *τετρά ἀμωμοί*, the 'sons of God without rebuke,' as the same apostle's expressioun is to the Philippians, chap. ii. 15, so that even a carping Momus cannot spy a fault.

But this cannot be the right way of interpreting this clause, since we find the *as* in the next, and therefore we are to understand light metaphorically ; and so our chief work is to inquire what the apostle intends by this metaphor of light.

I shall not trouble you with the various acceptions of the word in holy writ ; let it suffice to know,

There is a threefold light, *ad quod, per quod, in quo, to which, by which, and in which* we are to walk.

1. There is a light *to which* we walk, namely, the light of glory and happiness. Those two chief excellencies, life and light, are not unfitly made choice of in Scripture, to shadow forth the future estate of the glorified. St Paul calls it 'the inheritance of the saints in light,' Col. i. 13,\* to shew how pleasant, glorious, and amiable that inheritance is. This light is the *terminus ad quem*, term of a Christian's motion, to which the course of his life tendeth, and in which at last it endeth.

2. There is a light *by which* we walk, and this is double, to wit, external and internal, of the word and of the Spirit. *אור תורה, lex lux*, 'the law is a light, the commandment a lamp,' Prov. vi. 23, saith the son, and he learnt it of his father, who saith, Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a light to my feet, and a lantern to my paths,' it being God's word that discovereth to us the way wherein we should walk. And yet this is not enough without the other. Though, *adest lumen*, the sun shine never so bright, yet if, *desunt oculi*, eyes be wanting to make use of the light, it will be in vain to us. There must not only be a light before the eyes, but a light in the eyes, if we will see to go ; and therefore St Paul prayed that the 'eyes of their understanding might be enlightened,' Eph. i. 18, since it is only by the direction of the word, joined with the illumination of the Spirit, that we are enabled to walk in our spiritual journey.

3. Lastly, and to our present purpose, there is a light *in which* we are to walk, and that is the light of sanity and holiness, this being the path in which every Christian must tread ; and when we remember that the light spoken of God in the fifth verse intends his holiness, that the darkness mentioned in the former verse is put for wickedness, we may rationally conclude that by light here we are to understand holiness.

Having found out the meaning, it will not be amiss.

\* Vide Dave. *ibid.*

to inquire a little further into the analogy of the metaphor, which will the better appear if we consider the original, and the properties of light.

1. Light is of a celestial extraction. Springs of water arise out of the earth, but the fountain of light is in the heavens. Those flowers of light are found in no garden but the supernal firmament. So is holiness of an heavenly parentage; as prudence, so piety is that which is from above, James iii. 17. That of our Saviour, 'Except a man be born again,' John iii. 5, may, according to a double signification of the word *γεννηθῆναι*, be read, 'Except a man be born from above;' and indeed St Cyril doth so interpret it. Our *generation* is in some sort from below, but our *regeneration* is only from above; and for this reason partly, though not principally, is holiness called by the apostle Peter the divine nature, because of a divine original. Indeed, Christ calls it our light, when he saith to his disciples, 'Let your light shine before men;' and so it is *subjectivè*, but not *effectivè*, our light, because *in us*, but not *from us*, and therefore it is so *ours* as that it is primarily *his* from whence we receive it.

2. Light, among others, hath two special properties, namely, clarity and beauty, the one following the other. Light is of a clear, bright, splendid nature, and by reason hereof it is of a very beautiful and lovely aspect, yea, it is the great ornament of the world, putting a beauty on all things else, since without it the redness of the rose, the whiteness of the lily, all natural and artificial beauty, were as good be not existing, because not appearing. By these two properties are represented those two parts of holiness which consists *in purgamento* and *in ornameto*, cleansing and adorning. In holiness, there is purity, which answereth the splendour; and there is conformity, which answereth to the beauty of light. Holiness is expulsive of all sin, and thereby maketh the soul bright; holiness restoreth God's image, and thereby maketh the soul beautiful; indeed, it is holiness that puts a beauty upon all other excellencies. Our naturals, morals, our intellectuals, are then ornaments, when, like the diamond to the ring, holiness is superadded to them.

You see what this light is, and how fitly light doth illustrate it. But yet this is not all; for since this light we are speaking of is the way, the only way, to communion with God, remission of sins, and eternal life; and besides, since there are some things which glitter and yet are not this light,—such are civility, morality, and pharisaical sanctity,—so that it is not only possible, but easy to mistake; give me leave yet a little more distinguishingly to characterise this light to you.

To which end, since God is compared by the psalmist to the sun, Ps. lxxiv. 12, and Christ is called by the prophet Malachi a 'Sun of righteousness,' Mal. iv. 2, and this light is of the same quality with God's, nay, is a ray and beam of his, we may infer that the light to which holiness is here resembled is sunlight; and so the differences which are between the light of

the sun and that of the moon and the stars will aptly seem to difference holiness from those other things that seem to come near to it.

To instance briefly in a few particulars.

1. The light of the sun helpeth a man to see and find out the filth in his house, yea, to search into the most secret corners of every room, whereas the moon and starlight only helpeth a man to see a little abroad in the open streets and fields. This is a singular difference between pharisaical and real sanctity: that is curious to look abroad, but seeth nothing at home: so that pharisee condemned the publican, and saw nothing in himself worthy of blame; but this is careful to look at home, and searcheth into the secret corners, the very spirit of the mind. So did good David when he prayed, Ps. xix. 12, 'Cleanse thou me from secret faults.'

2. The sunlight discovereth motes, and pins, and atoms, things of the least and smallest quantity, whereas the moon and starlight only manifests trees, and houses, and such things as are of a great magnitude. This is the difference between sanctity and morality: morality teacheth a man to avoid gross vices, notorious offences, scandalous enormities, but it is only holiness which causeth a man to make conscience of the least sins\* as well as the greatest.

3. The sunlight representeth those things which may be seen by moon and starlight, in another clearer, fuller way; hence it is we cannot give so true a judgment of the greatness or colour of anything by moon and star as by sunlight. The parallel holds in this present matter. Holiness enlightens a man to look on the same sins which morality and civility discovereth with another and a clearer aspect, since whilst the civil person only abhors them as enemies to his good name, and the moralist as repugnant to reason, the holy man loathes them as breaches of God's law and offences to his majesty; for so repenting David, Ps. li. 4, and the returning prodigal, Luke xv. 21, looked upon their sins, as against and before God.

4. The sunlight, though gradually, yet powerfully, expelleth darkness out of the air, so that the night becometh day; whereas the moon and starlight only mitigeth and lesseneth it, and therefore the darkness prevailing, it is night still. This is that which puts a difference between sanctity and civility: civility restraineth sin, but holiness conquereth it; civility lesseneth the actings, yet taketh not away the power; whereas holiness, though not all at once, yet by degrees, subdueth the power of corruption.

5. Finally, the sunlight is ever attended with heat, driving away cold as well as darkness; whereas the moon and starlight can only illuminate, but not warm, which appeareth in that the moon and stars shine brightest when the night is coldest. This is the peculiar

\* Hanc sollicitudinem non facit nisi Spiritus sanctus, qui nec minimam paleam intra cordis quod possidet habitaculum patitur residere.—Bern. *Serm. 1, de Sp. S.*



efficacy of true holiness, that it doth not only irradiate the understanding, but inflame the will and affections with a love to God and zeal for his glory; in which respect it is that they whom Christ 'purifieth to himself a peculiar people,' are said to be 'zealous of good works,' Titus ii. 14.

By this time, I hope, beloved, you are in some measure enlightened to understand the nature of this light wherein we are to walk. It would not be passed by what this importeth, that we are required to walk in this light, since the emphasis of the phrase holdeth as well in regard of good as evil.

The better to clear this, be pleased to consider *walking* in a double opposition, to bare *stepping*, and to *standing still*.

1. It is not taking a step or two in the light, which denominateth a man a walker; it is not a few good actions, but a good conversation, which speaketh a man a Christian. St Paul bids Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 7, to 'exercise himself in godliness;' and the prophet's counsel, Isa. i. 17, is, 'Learn,' or, as it may be rendered, 'accustom\* yourselves to do well.' It is the constant, habitual practice and exercise of holiness, which may most justly be called a walking in the light. Indeed, this walking is not opposed to stumbling, no, nor yet to falling; there is a great deal of difference, *inter currentis casum et vitæ cursum*, between the course of life in which a man runs, and the falls he may catch in running. If not only in some particular acts, but our general course, we practise holiness, though we cannot but sometimes fall into sin, we shall be found walking in the light.

2. It is not to begin in the way of holiness, and then stand still, but we must go forward to perfection. St Austin very aptly expounds† *ambulare* by *proficere*. Walking is a proficiency in holiness; indeed, both the metaphors in the text press this duty. Holiness is as light, which shineth more and more to the perfect day; living holily is as walking, wherein we go on step by step, till we come to the journey's end.‡ True it is we do not, cannot, always walk with even pace; sometimes all we can do is to creep, and then again our hearts are so enlarged that we can run; but, however, the good Christian will still be going, never accounting himself to have attained. Indeed, so long as we are in this world, our holiness is rather *in fieri* than *in facto*, perfecting than perfect, 2 Cor. vii. 1. When we come to be *comprehensores*, we shall sit down, but whilst we are *viatores*, we must walk on in the light.

What now remaineth, but that every one of us reflect upon himself, and ask his soul this question, Do I walk in the light? To which, by a faithful inquiry into our conversation, according to the preceding charac-

ters, we may be able to return an answer. Only, for our further quickening in this work, I shall briefly mind you of these following considerations:

1. There is a great deal of difference between talking of, and walking in, the light. Our lips may drop as the honeycomb, whilst we are 'in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,' Acts viii. 23. Many have golden tongues and leaden feet. It is not Scripture discourse, but a religious course, which denominateth a man a Christian.

2. It is one thing to have the light of knowledge, and another thing to walk in the light of holiness. Too many men, as well as children, are troubled with the rickets; their heads are big, full of speculation, but their feet are unable to walk in spiritual actions. 'If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them,' John xiii. 7. Having the light may help us with Moses to see the land of Canaan, but it is walking in the light must bring us with Joshua to enter into it. Though we have mouths and speak well, eyes and see well, yet if we have feet that walk not, hands that work not, we are but idle (idol) Christians.

3. It is not barely *not walking in darkness*, but *walking in the light*, that is required of a Christian. The pharisee's religion in the Gospel consists chiefly of negatives, Luke xviii. 11, but our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees. So saith our great Lawgiver, Mat. v. 20. Indeed, it is good not to do evil, but, withal, it is evil not to do good. The unprofitable as well as the prodigal is an evil servant. We must not only cast away our transgressions, but make us new hearts, Ezek. xviii. 31; cleanse from filthiness, Isa. i. 18, but perfect holiness, 2 Cor. vii. 1; cease to do evil, but learn to do well; not walk in the darkness, but walk in the light.

4. It is not a mere resolution, but the real execution of holiness, that entitleth to happiness. Oh how many are cast into utter darkness, who here resolved to walk in the light! In vain are those purposes which have a conception but no birth, which only blossom but never bear ripe fruit. The repenting prodigal, as he said, 'I will arise,' so he 'did arise and go to his father,' Luke xv. 18-20. Holy David saith, Ps. cxix. 109, 'I have sworn,' and withal addeth, 'I will perform it.' Only this must be understood with one caution, if God give time and place of performance, otherwise that of St Paul concerning alms, 2 Cor. viii. 12, is generally true, 'if there be a willing mind it is accepted;' in which respect it is a very uncharitable opinion which excludeth all deathbed penitent resolutions from divine acceptance. Indeed, that deathbed promises of amendment are seldom real, is not to be denied, yea, that when they are real, it is very difficult, if not impossible, for themselves or others certainly to know it, must needs be granted, and therefore the case of such persons is doubtful and dangerous; but since God's grace can speedily work a change in the will and affections, and where such a change is wrought,

\* למד in Kal significat et didicit et assuevit.

† Ambulare breviter dico proficere.—Aug. Serm. 15, de verb. apost.

‡ Homo in luce ambulat, qui in virtutum operibus proficit.—Aquin.

the resolutions must needs be cordial, and such as (if life were afforded) would undoubtedly be accomplished. We have reason to believe that he who always accepts the deed chiefly for the will, will in such a case accept the will for the deed, and therefore the condition of such an one is not altogether desperate. But still, beloved, this stands in full force as to us, who have as yet life and health continued to us. Our purposes will be to no purpose, if they be not attended with practices; nor is it if we *will*, but if we do *walk* in the light. And thus I have acquainted you with the matter; go we on to

The manner of the duty, in those words, 'as he is in the light,' wherein we shall consider two things:

What is here asserted concerning God, 'he is in the light;'

What is here required from us, implied in that particle 'as.'

1. God is said here to be 'in the light;' a very improper expression, according to a strict acceptation. When it is said of God, at the fifth verse, that he is light, we must look upon the phrase as only metaphorical, since he is ten thousand times brighter than the sun; but when here he is said to be in the light, it is a catachrestical expression, since it is impossible either that the light should be in him, who hath no accident, or that he should be in light, who is infinite and illimited. Nay, indeed, those two phrases, *he is light*, and *he is in the light*, seem one to contradict the other, since nothing can be said strictly to be in itself;\* but both the phrases being allusive, they may well stand together. And this latter, if construed according to its true intention, will be found emphatically significant.

If you please to difference the meaning of these two phrases, you may refer the one, 'God is light,' to his nature, and the other, 'he is in the light,' to his works. So Grotius giveth the sense of this phrase,† he is in the light; that is, he is conversant in most pure actions. According to that of the psalmist, Ps. cxlv. 17, 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;' to which agreeth that of the heathen, *ὁ θεὸς τῶν ἀγαθῶν φῶς ἐστίν*, God could not be God, if his actions were not exactly pure and holy.

But I rather conceive the intent of these phrases to be the same, to wit, a delineation of God's pure and holy nature; and there are two things which this expression of his being in the light intimateth concerning it, namely, the perfection and immutability of his holiness.

1. There is a great deal of difference between these two expressions, to *have light* in one, and for one to *be in the light*. The former noteth only some measure of participation, but the latter a complete fruition. This

\* Lux non est propriè in luce.—Carthus.

† In luce, i. e. versatur in purissimis actionibus.—Grot. in loc.

may be clear by an instance, taken from the water. A man that drinketh down a small quantity of water may be said to have water in him, but when a man is compassed, and covered over head and ears in water, he is then most truly said to be in it. To parallel it with an instance in Scripture: every man, even the best, by reason of the remainders of sin, is said to have flesh in him, but only the wicked man, who is under the power of sin, is said to be 'in the flesh,' Rom. viii. 8. Thus, whereas we at best have only some light of holiness in us, God is in the light, so that nothing of the light of holiness is a-wanting to him, but he is absolutely, completely holy.

2. There is not unfitly observed by expositors\* a discrepancy between these two phrases of *walking* and *being* in the light. *Walking* noteth a progressive motion, *being* a fixed residence. We are still passing from one degree to another, and according to the apostle's expression, 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'changed into the divine image' of holiness 'from glory to glory,' but he is (to wit, eternally and unchangeably) in the light; in which respect that phrase of *dwelling*, used by St Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 16, answereth this of *being* used by St John. He is and dwelleth in that light, as of majesty, so purity, to which no man can attain; and that from everlasting to everlasting.

By what hath been said, you see what is asserted concerning God. We must now consider what is required of us in the particle *as*, namely, a conformity to God's pattern by walking in, *as* he is in, the light.

Upon the hearing of this message, I believe many are ready to put forth the question, How can this be? God is so in the light, that in him is no darkness; and our lives, like the Israelites' clond, have a dark side as well as a light. God's holiness is perfect and unspotted, ours is imperfect and defective; so that if this be the condition, this supposition can never be a position, and not only few, but none shall be saved.

But how harsh soever this (which is here mentioned) may seem, yet it is no more than what is necessary. Indeed, when we find St John, not once, but again, not only in metaphorical, but plain terms, calling on us to be pure and righteous as God is; yea, Christ himself requiring us to be perfect, as his Father is perfect, Mat. v. 48; and God himself, to be holy, as he is holy, Lev. xx. 7; we have reason to look upon this addition as of weighty and needful concernment. And therefore to remove this objection, and clear the genuine sense of this *as*, be pleased to observe this threefold solution.

1. There is a double *as*, to wit, of *likeness* and of *equality*.† The one respects the kind, the other the degree; that the nature, this the measure of the thing. Our light in which we are to walk must be like to that in which God is, though the light in which God is be infinitely brighter than ours. Look as it is between the stream and the fountain, the branch and

\* Vide Carthus. Serrar in loc. † ὡς ἰσότητος, ὁμοιότητος.



the root, the air and the sun, so is it between God and a Christian. The same water is in the stream that is in the fountain, the same sap in the branch that is in the root, the same light in the air that is in the sun; though the water, and the sap, and the light are primarily and most plenary in the fountain, the root, the sun. Indeed, to speak exactly, we cannot call the holiness of a saint the same with God's holiness, because this (as all his attributes) is his essence, which is incommunicable to any creature; besides, his holiness is infinite, and ours finite; and infinite and finite must needs *toto genere distare*, differ generically. But the holiness in us is the image of that holiness in God, and, as it were, the stamp and impression of God's holiness upon us; in which regard holiness is one of those attributes of God which the schools call communicable, because God is pleased to communicate the likeness of it to his saints; and therefore they are truly said by the author to the Hebrews, chap. xii. 10, to 'partake of his holiness,' and here by the apostle John, to 'walk in the light, as he is in the light.'

2. We must distinguish *inter effectum et affectum, actum et conatum*, between an effectual performance and an affectionate endeavour. As for the walking in the light, you have already heard it must not only be in affection, but action. But so to walk, as God is in the light, is that which, because we cannot fully attain to, it will suffice to desire and endeavour after. To this purpose is that gloss upon the text, he is said to walk as God is in the light, who striveth to imitate divine purity.\* When a master sets his scholar an exact copy, and bids him write as that is written, his meaning is, not that he should cut all his letters with the same dexterity, and transcribe the lines with the same evenness that he hath done, but that he should endeavour to come as near it as may be; the same, no doubt, is the intention of the Holy Ghost in this and the like scriptures, to put us upon a cordial study of following God in the footsteps of his purity and holiness.

3. Besides these no less true than apt solutions, there seemeth to me yet a plainer answer in the words themselves, by observing the difference between these two expressions of *walking* and *being* in the light. It is not said we must *be* in the light as he *is* in the light, but we must *walk* as he *is*, look *as he is* in the light, so that there is not the least darkness of sin in him. So we must walk in the light, and not indulge ourselves in any sinful work of darkness; so that to walk in the light as God is in the light, is so to walk in the light, as that we do not walk in, though we be not wholly free from, darkness. He, then, that liveth not in a course of known sin, that leadeth a conversation without any reigning iniquity, as God is without any sin at all, he walketh in the light as he is in the light; and who will not acknowledge but this is

that which every one not only may, but must attain to, who expects these glorious privileges.

And now, to what should the meditation of this clause serve, but to,

1. Humble us for our spiritual pride. How usual is it with most of us to have overweening conceits of our own worth, to think ourselves better than indeed we are, and by reason of self-sufficiency, to make a stop in our proficiency; one special cause whereof is, that we measure our holiness by a false standard, and do not weigh ourselves in the balance of the sanctuary.\* We look upon the profane rabble of the world, and presently judge ourselves holy enough, and because we wander not in their Cimmerian, Egyptian darkness, conclude ourselves to walk in the light; but tell me, thou that pleasest thyself as if thou wert holy enough, art thou as holy as Paul, who calls to the Philippians, chap. iii. 17, and in them to all Christians, 'be ye followers of me'? Nay, art thou as holy as the angels, when yet thy prayer is, that thou mayest do God's will on earth as they do in heaven? Mat. vi. 10. Nay, once more, art thou as holy as Christ, as God, whom here the apostle sets before thee as a pattern? Alas! thou that lookest on thy left hand (them that are worse than thyself) with scorn, didst thou look on thy right hand (those examples that so far excel thee), hast more reason to tremble; thou that castest thine eyes only behind thee and standest still, didst thou look before thee, couldst not choose but haste forward. Stars are glorious things in comparison of candles; but, alas! how is their splendour obscured when the sun ariseth. Compare thy light with that of the apostles, angels, God himself, and 'be not high-minded, but fear.'

2. Inflame us with a spiritual ambition. Though our minds must be lowly, yet our aims should be high, only with this caution, not to be great, but good. It was indeed the heinous crime of the fallen angels (as is probably† supposed), of our first parents (as is clearly manifest), that they desired to be as gods; but it was in point of knowledge, of majesty, not of holiness. And truly we their unhappy progeny are too much of the same mind; we would walk in the light of knowledge and glory, as he is in the light. But far be those thoughts and desires from sincere Christians. Let us make him our pattern for walking in the light, which he hath appointed us to walk in, to wit, of purity and holiness, and thus let us walk as fast as we can, and aspire as high as we may, till we come to the utmost degree of conformity which our created and finite nature is capable of; and whereas man, desiring to walk in the light of God's knowledge, fell from his estate of innocency, our endeavour to walk in the light of his purity will restore us to that state of integrity, which, here inchoated, shall be hereafter consummated.

\* Quomodo proficis, qui jam tibi sufficis?—Ambrose.

† Vide Alex, Alens Theol. summ. part. 2. q. 98, gen. 3, 5.

\* Qui ad ejus similitudinem aspirat.—Marlorat. in loc.

To end all, put both these parts together, we must walk in the light as he is in the light; and this double consequence will naturally flow:—

1. True conversion maketh a manifest and wonderful alteration. The poet,\* speaking of a grafted tree, saith,

Miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma,  
it wondereth at those new leaves and fruits with which it is adorned; so do converts themselves, and all that behold them, wonder at the change which is wrought in them. Every man by his first birth is still-born, 'dead in sin;' by his new birth he becometh 'alive to God:' as the father said of the prodigal, Luke xv. 32, 'This my son was dead and is alive.' And surely what a difference was between Lazarus lying dead in the grave and Lazarus standing alive on his feet, the same is between a natural and a regenerate man. Every man naturally walketh in darkness, and is a slave to the prince of darkness; every convert walketh in the light, as he is in the light; so that, look what alteration there is in the same air by the arising of the sun, the like is in the same person by the infusion of holiness.

2. That the work of Christianity is attended with no small difficulty. Ah, Lord, how light do most men make of their general calling! How easy a matter do they account it to get to heaven! But surely they are such whom the devil casts into a sad sleep, and sootheth up with fond dreams. Who can read that general assertion of our Saviour, Mat. vii. 13, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,

\* Virg. Eclog.

that leadeth to life;' yea, this more particular delineation of that way by the apostle, Philip. ii. 12, to be a 'walking in the light as he is in the light,' and not 'work out his salvation with fear and trembling?' Brethren, if we intend to enjoy communion with God, we must walk, not sit; there is no stepping out of the world's ease into God's rest; yea, we must walk upwards, ascend to divine perfection; there is no coming to heaven *per saltum*, but *per scansum*. It is no leaping thither in a moment. In a word, if it be no easy thing to be holy, it must needs be difficult to be happy.

And therefore let us, in a sense of the work's difficulty, together with our own impotency, make our addresses to the throne of grace, and that both for the light wherein we are to walk, and the feet which may enable us to walk in this light; pray we that he would by his preventing grace infuse the habit of holiness into our hearts, and then by his assisting grace strengthen us to act that holiness in our lives. Finally, according to the counsel of that devout ancient,\* when we first set foot upon the ladder of piety, considering our deficiency and God's excellency, let us stretch forth our hands to him who is at the top of the ladder, saying with the spouse, Cant. i. 4, 'Draw me, and we will run after thee.' So shall we at the last come to him, and be with him in the light of purity and glory for ever.

\* Adhuc in pede vel ascendens scalse positus, in te deficiens, et altitudinem ejus prospiciens, debes sursum manus extendere ad Dominum, qui est innixus supremæ parti scalse, &c. —Zutph, lib. 2, de Spir. Ascens.

### SERMON XIII.

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—1 JOHN I. 7.*

THE life of man on earth is a race, and every one in this world a traveller. The ways in which all men walk are fitly and fully enumerated to be two, the one on the right, the other on the left hand.\* So much Pythagoras his Y imports; the one a straight and narrow way, the other a wide and broad way:

Litera Pythagoræ discrimine secta bicorui, &c.

So our blessed Saviour plainly asserts, Mat. vii. 13, 14, the one a lightsome and the other a dark path, as St John here insinuateth. Hence it is that all men who either have been, are, or shall be, are marshalled into two ranks, 'sheep and goats,' 'the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent,' the 'righteous and the wicked.' In Italy, after the Guelphs and the Ghibelines, there arose two factions, which were called the *Albi* and the *Atri*, the white and the black.† These

\* Dux sunt viæ, una æquitatis, altera iniquitatis, &c.—Ambros. in Ps. i. † Cresol. de virtut. pars prima. c. iiii.

two indeed divide the whole world, all men being children of God or of the devil, such as 'walk in the light' and such as 'walk in darkness.' These two ways are so directly contrary in their natures, that though a man may go out of the one into the other, yet it is impossible he should at once walk in both; and therefore St John sets the one in a manifest antithesis to the other; 'but if we walk in the light.' Nor are they less contrary in their ends than in their natures; the one leadeth to life, the other to destruction. So Christ expressly, the one causeth a separation between God and us, and therefore they lie who, walking in darkness, say they have fellowship with God; the other leadeth to communion with God, and an interest in Christ. So it is affirmed in the words of the text. 'But if we walk,' &c.

Having despatched the qualification, which respects our duty, pass we now on to the collation, which representeth God's mercy; and that in respect of two



excellent benefits here specified, namely, fellowship with God, and cleansing by Christ: the one in those words, 'We have fellowship one with another;' the other in those, and 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Of each in their order.

1. The first of these benefits, namely, our fellowship with God, hath been already explicated from the third verse, and therefore I shall not need here to insist upon it. Indeed, the phrase *one with another* seemeth to intimate another kind of fellowship than that before handled, namely, that fellowship which those who walk in the light have one with another; but the connection will by no means admit this interpretation, this fellowship of them that walk in the light being an inference from the consideration of God's being light, and therefore must be understood of the fellowship they have with him. Suitable to this it is that Grotius and Docteur Hammond,\* observe the space in the king's manuscript to be so little, that it may more probably be supposed as left for *αυτου* than *αλληλων*. But our Greek copies do plainly read it *αλληλων*; and so it may (as Beza and others† observe) admit a very fit exposition. In reference to God, we have fellowship one with another; that is, he with us, and we with him.

And truly this is that which we may very well look upon with admiration and astonishment, and that both in the one part and in the other. When we consider that we have fellowship with him, it may teach us to admire at the exaltation of a saint; when we consider that he hath fellowship with us, we have reason to wonder at the condescension of God. How may we here make use of St Paul's words, Rom. xi. 33, 'Oh the height, oh the depth,' oh the height of advancement, oh the depth of his abasement! Would we not think that beggar highly preferred, whom a king should admit to fellowship with himself in his palace? Would we not conclude that king did much undervalue himself, who should vouchsafe to have fellowship with the beggar in his cottage? And yet thus it is between God and a Christian; hereafter we shall have communion with him in his palace, now he hath communion with us in our cottage. Oh our dignity, oh his indignation! How high are we exalted, how low doth he stoop! The truth is, there is not a more familiar fellowship between the dearest friends, than there is between God and the saints; in which respect Stobæus‡ asserts, *μίαν ἔναι κοινήν πολιτείαν*, that there is a common negotiation and converse between God and pure minds. Oh let them rejoice in, be thankful to, and wonder at it.

That which is yet further to be taken notice of, is the habitude and relation which walking in the light, and fellowship with God, bear one to the other; for the better clearing whereof, conceive it in this double

notion. Walking in the light is both *medium disponens*, and *testimonium firmans*, a means disposing the subject for, and a testimony assuring the person of, fellowship with God.

1. If we walk in the light, we have fellowship, inasmuch as walking in the light doth make us fit for fellowship with God. That we may rightly understand this, it will be needful to make use of that known distinction between *meritum de condigno et de congruo*, condignity, which is properly merit, and congruity, which is only so called in a large and improper sense. Our walking in the light hath no worthiness to deserve so great a privilege as fellowship with God, because it is no more than what is our duty; so that when we have done our best, we have done but what we ought. But yet our walking in the light hath in it a fitness for this fellowship, so that though it do not oblige God, yet it qualifyeth us for this benefit, and that in two respects, inasmuch as,

1. It removeth that which otherwise would be offensive to God, and cause a separation. It is very observable, that when St James, chap. iv. 8, speaketh of our drawing nigh to God, and God's drawing nigh to us, he presently addeth, 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded,' thereby intimating that the cleansing from sin fits for approaching to God. Now by walking in the light, darkness is expelled, the heart is purified, the hands are cleansed, and so the person fitted for divine communion.

2. It rendereth the person in some measure like to, and so fits for fellowship with, God. It is a known maxim of the philosopher,\* *ὁμοίότης φιλότιτος μητρῆς*, likeness causeth love, and love fellowship. Where there is conformity, there must needs be congruity. God cannot but take delight in his own image. What is said of David is true of every holy person, he is 'a man after God's own heart,' Acts xiii. 22, he wills what he wills, and nills what he nills; and no wonder if there be a friendly communion between God and him.

3. If we walk in the light, we have fellowship; that is, our fellowship with God is assured to us by walking in the light. And if we consider the antithesis of this to the preceding verse, this construction cannot but seem very genuine, that as for them who walk in darkness to say they have fellowship with God is a lie, so, on the contrary, they who walk in the light may truly say they have fellowship with God, the one being an evident and infallible testimony of the other. To illustrate this briefly, you must know that this *κοινωνία*, fellowship, if taken for a participation of God's sanctity, is the cause of our walking in the light, since till we receive, by this participation, the light of holiness from God, we can never walk in it. Now though science, properly so called, is *a priori*, from the cause to the effect, yet our knowledge for the

\* Vide Grot. and Dr Hammond *in loc.*

† Vide Bez. Calv. Serrar.

‡ Stob. in Eclog. Phys. p. 115.

\* Aristot. Ethl.

most part, and especially in this particular, is à *posteriori*, from the effect to the cause; and so this walking in the light as an effect assureth us of its cause, fellowship with God.

The consideration hereof may serve for a touchstone and a whetstone, and so both rectify our judgments and quicken our endeavours.

1. Let it be a touchstone to try the truth of our interest in this fellowship, that so we may give a right estimate of our own condition. It is St Peter's counsel, 2 Peter i. 8, 'Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.' This fellowship my text speaketh of, is that to which we are elected before time, and called in time; but how shall we make it sure? Beza and Grotius\* both tell us, that in several Greek manuscripts these words are added, *διὰ καλῶν ἔργων*, 'by good works,' which are metaphorically a walking in the light. If, then, we would not be deceived in the knowledge of our election and vocation to this heavenly participation, let us measure ourselves by the course of our actions and integrity of our conversation.

2. Let it be a whetstone to set an edge upon our desires after walking in the light, that we may have fellowship with God. Surely if we have any belief of a deity, and acknowledge him to be the *summum bonum*, chiefest good, we cannot but account it our happiness to have the fruition of him. If, then, we desire this happy communion, let it be our care to lead holy conversations.

The truth is, fellowship with God is such a privilege, which, as on the one hand it is impossible to deserve, so on the other it is not sufficient to desire, but we must be in some measure fitted for it. There is none of us but would attain this fellowship, only we like not the way that leadeth to it; whereas it is in vain to expect the one without performing the other. As therefore we seriously desire fellowship with him, let us earnestly strive to walk in the light, as he is in the light. And so much shall suffice for the first benefit here assured; pass we on to the

2. Other, which indeed is the foundation of this; namely, our cleansing by Christ: 'and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' For the fuller discussion whereof I shall consider it two ways:

In itself; as it containeth a positive assertion, 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin.'

In its connection with the preceding part of the verse; intimated in that conjunctive particle *and*.

1. The plain position of this clause is, 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;' *insignis hic locus* (to use Calvin's † expression), an elegant and excellent sentence, wherein every word hath its weight, so that we might find in it as many parts as words. If you please to allude to a known and apt metaphor, here is observable the physician, the patients of that physician, the disease of those

\* Vid. Bez. Grot. *ibid*.

† Calv. in *loc*.

patients, the physic for that disease, the operation of that physic, and the efficacy of that operation.

1. The physician is Jesus Christ the Son of God, one who, being the Son of God, must needs be able and skilful. Since he is the *Christ*, he wants not a call to the office; and as he is *Jesus*, he cannot but be ready and willing to the work. Who can desire a better, who would seek after another physician than him, in whom skill and will, ability and authority, do meet?

2. The patients of this physician are expressed in the pronoun *us*. Conceive it by way of exclusion, *us*, not the angels; he is pleased to have no pity on their misery, nor to vouchsafe them any remedy. By way of inclusion, *us*, apostles, as well as others. None but stand in need of this physician; and they most need him, who think they have least.

3. The disease of these patients is sin, a disease both hereditary as to the root of it, which together with our nature we receive from our parents, and likewise contracted by ourselves upon ourselves, in the daily eruption of this corruption, by thoughts, words, and works; a disease that maketh the patient sick, dangerously, desperately sick, even to the death, yea, such as must inevitably have brought upon us, not only the first, but the second death, had not this physician interposed and undertaken the cure.

4. The physic which this physician administereth to the patient for the cure of his disease is blood, and, which is the wonder, his own blood. Indeed, the case so stood, that as none but this physician, so nor he but by his blood, could effect this cure, and behold, he is content to part with his own blood for our sakes.

5. The operation of this physic is by cleansing. Indeed, such is the excellency of Christ's blood, that it is both a purge and a cordial, strengthening and cleansing. None like this to comfort our hearts, none like this to purge out the ill-humours of our sins, whereby our spiritual health is restored.

6. Lastly, The efficacy of its operation, which appeareth by a double extent.

(1.) The one in regard of the disease. It cleanseth from *all sin*, that is, whatsoever can be called sin, of what kind, nature, degree soever it be, since the cure of no disease can be impossible to him that can do all things.\*

(2.) The other in respect of the permanency of this physic's virtue, implied in the present tense of the verb, this blood never losing its efficacy, cleansing not only when shed, but indeed both before and after, so that the patriarchs and prophets before Christ, the apostles who were contemporary with Christ, nay, all Christians after him to the end of the world, may truly take up this saying, 'The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' †

\* Omnipotenti medico nullum vulnus insanabile.—*Aug.* in *Ps.* lviii.

† Vide Bern. serm. 1, de nat. dom. et 66, de parv. et in 13 Cant.



But that I may rather break than crumble this bread of life, be pleased only to take notice of two general parts in this clause, namely,

The effect, or benefit itself, in those words, 'cleanseth from all sin.'

The cause and spring of this benefit in those words, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son.' Of the first briefly, of the latter more largely.

1. The benefit itself is cleansing from all sin, for the understanding of which we must know, that in sin there are two things considerable, to wit, *macula* and *reatus*, the stain whereby it defileth our natures, and the guilt by which it defileth our persons. According to these two, there is a double cleansing, the one of sanctification, the other of justification. Nor is it my distinction, but St Paul's, 1 Cor. vi. 11, where, having mentioned walking as the *genus*, he presently distinguisheth it into its *species*, sanctifying and justifying. The one, by subduing the dominion of sin, gradually abateth, and in due time shall, by an expulsion of the being, wholly take away the stain of sin upon our natures; the other so taketh away the guilt of sin, that the person is not in God's sight and account obliged to suffer the punishment due to it. If you ask which of these is here understood, I answer in a large sense, we may comprehend both, it being true that the blood of Christ hath in itself a moral efficacy to persuade, and withal hath purchased the Spirit of Christ to be annexed to it, which is the efficient cause of the cleansing of sanctification; in which respects our dying to sin, and redeeming us from all iniquity, are set down as ends, Titus ii. 13, 1 Peter ii. 24, yea, effects of Christ's death; but withal, in a proper sense, we are here to understand the cleansing of justification, partly because the walking in the light before mentioned includeth in it the purity of sanctification, and partly because this cleansing is here promised as a privilege to be conferred upon them that walk in the light.

To this purpose, it is rationally observed that,

1. Where cleansing from sin is required as a duty to be done by us, it is to be understood necessarily of cleansing by sanctification. So in that of the prophet, Isa. i. 16, 'Wash you, make you clean;' of the apostle St Paul, 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Let us cleanse ourselves;' St James, chap. iv. 8, 'Cleanse your hands,' and the like.

2. Where cleansing from sin is prayed for as a mercy of which we stand in need, it extends to both, as appears in David's penitential psalm, Ps. li. 2, 7, 10, where he beggeth of God washing, cleansing, purging, and creating in him a clean heart; since though the former principally refer to the cleansing of justification, yet the latter manifestly relateth to that of sanctification.

3. Where cleansing is promised as a benefit to be bestowed upon us, if it is not only, yet primarily, to be interpreted of cleansing by justification. Of this

nature are those evangelical promises we read of in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Jer. xxxiii. 8, Ezek. xxxvi. 25; and thus I conceive we are to interpret both the ninth and this present verse. According to this construction, the blessing here assured is that which is elsewhere called remission and forgiveness of sins. Why it is expressed by this metaphor of cleansing shall be, God willing, more fully illustrated in the handling of the ninth verse. Let it suffice for the present, that we have found out the genuine meaning of it, and so pass we on to,

2. That which is the chief intendment of this clause, the cause and spring of this benefit, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son.

This phrase of cleansing is both a metaphorical and a legal word, and in both it represents this blood of Christ.

1. As it is a metaphorical word. What water is in the corporal, that is this blood of Christ in the spiritual cleansing. Blood in a natural way is not cleansing, but defiling and besmearing; and yet, what water doth to material, that this blood doth to the immaterial cleansing. In this respect it is, that as men use to wash themselves in water, so Christ is said to wash us in his blood, Rev. i. 5. To this the promise in Ezekiel properly alludeth, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, where God saith, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you;' and for this end certainly Christ instituted water as the element in the holy sacrament of baptism, that he might thereby signify the cleansing efficacy of his blood.

2. As it is a legal word. What the blood of beasts in the law did typically, that the blood of Christ doth really, to wit, cleanse from sin.\* The author to the Hebrews observeth, chap. ix. 22, that 'almost all things in the law were purified with blood,' and 'without shedding of blood there was no remission.' Thus, in the ceremonies for legal uncleanness, there was for the most part blood used; and in their sacrifices for expiation of moral uncleanness, there was shedding of blood; to both which the apostle alludeth when he speaketh of 'the blood of bulls and goats,' and 'the ashes of an heifer,' the blood of bulls and goats being shed in their sin-offerings, and the ashes of a slain heifer used in cleansing those that touched a dead body. And surely what were all these cleansings by blood, but types and figures of the cleansing by Christ's blood, for which cause the apostle manifestly calls these purifyings, 'patterns of the heavenly things.' Indeed, as the same holy writer saith, 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin,' so that when expiation of sin is attributed to them, it is only to be understood in a typical and sacramental sense, as they were shadows, figures,

\* Est metaphora deducta ab aquâ, quâ quemadmodum ablunantur sordes corporis, ita sanguine, hoc est sacrificio Christi, tolluntur peccata nostra.—Lubbert. Adv. Socin. de serv. lib. ii. cap. 17.

representations of this blood whereof my text speaketh ; and therefore it is, they all vanished and were abrogated from the time of the shedding of this blood, in which they had their accomplishment, and by which this admirable effect was really and fully performed, the cleansing from all sin.

For the better understanding of this precious truth, give me leave briefly to resolve these three queries :

What we are here to understand by the blood of Christ.

What kind of causality this blood hath to the cleansing from sin.

Whence it is that this blood hath this causality.

And when I have thus opened the vein of this clause, I shall the better let out the blood contained in it for your spiritual refreshment.

1. In answer to the first of these, you must know that this blood of Christ is here to be taken both *metonymically* and *synecdochically*.

(1.) *Metonymically*. Socinus, making use of this trope, understandeth by Christ's blood God's new covenant, in which this benefit is promised ; a sense which, if admitted, yet, according to a right construction, will nothing advance his design. It is true, he maketh it a metonymy of the adjunct, as if the covenant were called Christ's blood only because it is confirmed by it ; but when St Paul telleth us in general, 2 Cor. i. 20, that 'all the promises are in him yea, as well as amen,' made, as made good ; yea, when our blessed Saviour in particular calleth it 'the blood of the new testament,' or covenant, Mat. xxvi. 28, because it was 'shed,' not so much for confirming the covenant, wherein remission of sins is promised us, 'for the remission,' that is, obtaining the remission, 'of sins,' which is promised in that covenant, it plainly appeareth, that if by blood we will understand the covenant, it must be metonymy, not so much of the adjunct as of the cause ; and so it amounts to this much, that the remission of sin which is promised in the new covenant is procured by the blood of Christ, which is as much as the orthodox doctrine asserts. But the right metonymy here necessarily to be taken notice of is, by the blood to understand the death of Christ, and this of the cause for the effect, because by the violent effusion of his blood his death was effected.

The better to clear this, take notice that the blood of Christ was shed, according to St Bernard\* (who supposeth they drew blood from his cheeks when they smote him) seven, but rather six, several times : soon after his birth, when at his circumcision they took away the foreskin of his flesh ; a little before his death, in the garden, when he was cast into that bloody sweat ; in his scourging, when they ploughed his back with whips, and made long furrows on his shoulders ; upon his coronation, when they platted his

head with a crown of thorns ; at his death on the cross ; in the piercing of his feet and hands with nails ; after his death, when his side was opened with a spear, blood and water gushing forth. And truly, though none of these times his blood was shed in vain, yet it is the 'blood of the cross.' When, together with his blood, he poured out his life, that was the offering for sin, in which respect it is expressly so called by St Paul, Col. i. 20. It is indeed by some\* asserted, that one drop of his blood, by reason of the hypostatical union, might have sufficed for the redemption of the world ; but that must be taken *cum grano salis*, since, supposing at least God's decree, it was no less blood than his life-blood, that could avail to the accomplishing this expiation.

(2.) *Synecdochically*. Socinianising Vorstius, making use of this trope, extends the synecdoche to that which he calls the whole oblation of Christ, and so comprehendeth not only his antecedent obedience, but his subsequent glory, to wit, of his resurrection, ascension, session, and intercession. But inasmuch as the author to the Hebrews expressly saith, chap. i. 3, that 'when he had purged our sins he sat down at the right hand of God ;' and again, chap. ix. 12, 'He entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us ;' yea, our blessed Saviour himself, John xix. 30, being ready to [give] up the Ghost, cried, 'It is finished ;' I shall not doubt to assert, but that what concerned the acquisition of this great benefit was then fully performed, though the resurrection, with the consequents of it, were needful for the effectual application of it to us. This synecdoche, therefore, is to be extended only to his passion, one part put for the whole of his sufferings, and so we are to construe it not only of his blood, but his body ; since, as the one was shed, the other was crucified, and as here, 'his blood cleanseth from sin,' so in St Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 22, he is said to 'bear our sins on his body.' Yea, St Paul, Col. i. 20, 21, ascribeth our reconciliation both to his blood and to his body ; nor yet only of his body and blood, but his soul also, in which, suffering a subtraction of the divine vision, he cried out upon the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?' Mat. xxvii. 46, and therefore the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 10, foretelling his passion, mentioneth his 'soul which was made an offering for sin.' In a word, not only his blood, and body, and soul, but his whole person is to be included, the passion being expiatory, as you shall hear more fully anon, in that it was the passion of such a person, and therefore it is often said he gave up himself, Gal. ii. 26, Eph. v. 2, Titus ii. 11 ; and more appositely to our present purpose is that of the author to the Hebrews, chap. i. 3, 'by himself he purged our sins.'

\* *Gutta sanguinis modica, propter unionem ad verbum, pro redemptione totius humani generis satisfecisset. — Extrav. commun. lib. v. tit. ix. cap. 2, Clem. 6.*

\* Vide. Bern. de pass. dom. cap. 32.



2. For the resolution of the second question, be pleased to take notice,

1. That the cleansing of our sins is attributed in Scripture to God, to Christ, to faith; and all of them have a real and several influence upon this benefit. The principal efficient of this cleansing is God, to whom therefore it is attributed in the ninth verse. The instrument receiving the benefit is faith, and therefore it is said to be through faith. The meritorious cause, deserving this benefit at the hands of God for us, is Christ's blood. Indeed, Socinus\* asserts (with a *nihil verius*) that God and Christ act in the same way of efficiency, only with this difference, God is the principal and Christ the organical cause, and so God forgiveth by Christ; but whilst he only asserts, but doth not prove it, we may as confidently deny as he affirmeth, especially when the Scriptures express that not *per* but *propter Christum*, by, but for Christ we are forgiven. So our translators render the sense of St Paul's *ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ*, 'for Christ's sake,' Eph. iv. 32; and our apostle in the twelfth verse of the next chapter saith, our sins are forgiven, *διὰ το ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*, 'for his name's sake.'

2. More particularly, Christ's blood is the meritorious cause of cleansing us from sin, inasmuch as he thereby took our sins upon himself. This is the truth which the apostle Peter manifestly asserts where he saith, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 4, 'He bore our sins on his own body on the tree,' and presently addeth, 'by whose stripes we are healed.' Healing and cleansing are parallel phrases, our sins being the diseases of our souls. Of these sicknesses we are healed, of these sins we are cleansed, by Christ bearing them on his body; which, because it was done on high, upon the tree, the apostle useth not barely *ἠνεγκε* but *ἀνήνεγκε*, which signifieth *sursum tulit*, not only he bore, but he carried up, whereby the sense is not diminished but augmented, as having in it a fit allusion to the sacrifices which were lift up upon the altar. It is very considerable in this respect, that the Hebrew† word *שָׂא*, and the Greek *ἄνω* (like the Latin *tollo*), signify both *ferre* and *auferre*, to bear and to take away; and both these are used concerning Christ in this particular, the one by the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 4, where he saith, 'he bore our griefs;' the other by John Baptist, John i. 29, when he saith, 'he taketh away the sins of the world;' and most aptly, because he taketh away the sin from us by taking it upon himself.

To unbowel this precious truth, know,

1. That Christ, bleeding and dying on the cross, stood in our stead and suffered in our room. To this purpose are those expressions, where Christ is said to suffer for us, 1 Pet. ii. 21, to die for the people, John xi. 50; for so much the preposition *ὑπὲρ* sometimes signifieth, as when St Paul, Rom. vii. 3, wisheth to be anathema, *ὑπὲρ ἀδελφῶν*, for or instead of his brethren,

\* Socin. in loc.

† Vide Sherer Itinerar. in ps. super verbum, *שָׂא*.

and when the apostles are said, 2 Cor. v. 20, to be ambassadors, *ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ*, for, that is, in Christ's stead. More clearly to this intent is that phrase of the evangelist, Mat. xx. 28, where Christ is said to give his life a ransom for many, 'the preposition being not *ὑπὲρ* but *ἀντὶ*, which always implieth a commutation, and when it is applied to persons, signifieth the coming of one into the room of another. So Archelaus is said to reign in Judea, *ἀντὶ Ἡρώδου τοῦ πατρὸς*, 'in the room of his father Herod,' Mat. ii. 22. Yea, that this sense is intended where spoken of Christ's sufferings, appears by St Paul's question, 1 Cor. i. 13, 'Is Paul crucified for you?' for if it were only meant *for your good*, Paul might have been crucified for them, as he tells the Colossians, chap. i. 24, 'I rejoice in my sufferings for you;' and therefore *crucified for you*, must be as much as *in your stead*, which neither Paul nor any other could be.

2. That Christ standing in our stead, death was inflicted on him by God for our sins. This no doubt is the genuine meaning of those scriptures where he is said to be 'wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities,' Isa. liii. 5; and again, 'he was delivered for our offences,' Rom. iv. 25, he 'died for our sins,' 1 Cor. xv. 3. That these phrases cannot properly note the final cause, appeareth, in that the end of his death is not our sins, but what is directly contrary to our sins, the destruction of them. Who ever said that physic was taken for death, that is, the avoiding death, but for the disease, the disease being that which necessitateth to physic? Besides, to instance yet nearer, when we say, a man died for theft, for murder, or treason, what else do we mean, but that those crimes were the deserving cause which brought him to his end? Thus Christ 'died for our sins,' our sins bringing him to his cross, to his grave. In this sense no doubt it is that the apostle saith, 2 Cor. v. 21, he (that is God) 'made him to be sin for us,' to wit, at least so far as to be made a sacrifice for our sins, when yet he 'knew no sin,' namely, in himself; and look as the beast in the law was slain and sacrificed in the room and for the sin of the person that brought it, so was Christ crucified in our stead because of our sin.

3. That Christ, bleeding and dying for our sins, suffered that punishment which was due to us. It was the commination of God to Adam, Gen. ii. 17, 'Thou shalt die the death.' Death then was the punishment due to him and all his posterity for sin; and this death, which we must have undergone in our own persons, is inflicted upon Christ. To this purpose it is, that Christ is said by the apostle to be 'made a curse,' Gal. iii. 13. When this, but when he hung upon the tree? for 'cursed is every one that hangeth upon the tree'; so that the curse which the law pronounceth against us was laid on him. If it be said that the curse and death which was due to us was eternal, whereas Christ's was temporary, I answer, that

duration is but a circumstance to the thing; and the reason why on us it must have been eternal, is because our punishment could no other way be infinite, which yet is required for the satisfaction of an infinite offended justice, whereas the case is far different in respect of Christ, as will appear presently.

4. That Christ having suffered that punishment which belonged to us, we must needs be thereby acquitted and cleansed. To this purpose he is called by the author to the Hebrews, chap. vii. 22, a surety; and look as the surety, paying his debt for whom he is bound, dischargeth him from his creditor, so Christ, suffering our punishment, freeth us from the obligation to it, which is all one with cleansing from the guilt of sin. And the reason is plain, for since the guilt of sin is its binding the sinner over to the punishment, Christ taking that punishment upon himself, and suffering it in our room, must needs thereby cleanse us from that guilt; so that in few words, Christ's blood being *λύτρον*, a *laver*, became *λύτρον*, a *price*, satisfactory for our debt, hath obtained the forgiveness of it to us, and so we are cleansed.

Having in some measure, according to the Scriptures, explained the genuine notion of this causality, I shall not much trouble myself nor you with those far-fetched and jejune inventions of the Socinians, whereby they endeavour to elude these truths; and yet I cannot pass by one evasion, because it is that Socinus\* annexeth to this very scripture, as if this saying, the blood of Christ cleanseth from sin, were no more but that his blood declareth us to be, and assureth us that we are cleansed. So that what the orthodox attribute to the sacrament, instituted by Christ in commemoration of his blood, that these heretics attribute to the blood itself; but how incongruous it is to expound this of a declarative cleansing, appeareth in that the apostle, who could best interpret his own language, in the very next verse save one, unfolds it by forgiving. Besides, this construction maketh cleansing from sin to antecede Christ's blood, for if it did not pre-exist, there could not be any declaring or confirming of it, whereas the Scripture, both here and elsewhere, Eph. i. 4, Col. i. 24, plainly, positively asserteth this cleansing to flow from, and come through, the blood of Christ. The consideration hereof no doubt forced Socinus to the finding out of other solutions, and therefore he sometimes asserts, that Christ's blood cleanseth, inasmuch as it persuadeth us to a belief and hope of eternal life, whereby we are induced to holiness of life, and so our sins are cleansed; † but all which is hereby ascribed to Christ's death is only a moral causality, nay rather, a mere antecedency. Sure it is Christ's resurrection rather than his death which engenders that faith and hope in us, and it is not imaginable that the Scripture should so often attribute that to the death, which chiefly depends on the resurrection of Christ. Add to this

(which is very considerable), how remote (if any at all) an influence it is which Christ's blood, according to this sense, hath upon this cleansing, for (as Grotius hath well observed) the thread must be drawn out to this length.\*

Forgiveness and cleansing from sin is conferred upon them that live holily. To live holily, we are induced by a certain faith and hope of the reward, the example of Christ raised from the dead and exalted to glory; for the holiness of his life is a way to beget this faith and hope. That glorifying and rising his death did necessarily antecede, and thus our cleansing from sin is obtained by his blood; but how credible it is that the Scripture should so frequently, so positively, so expressly attribute this cleansing to Christ's blood, and yet the dependence of these one upon the other to be at so remote a distance, and of so slender an energy, let any one who hath but a competent use of his reason judge.

3. I proceed therefore to the answer of the last question. Nor need we go further than the text itself to find that. If you would know how this blood becometh so effectual to cleanse from sin, the answer is, because it is the 'blood of Jesus Christ his Son.'

I shall not altogether pass by, nor yet insist upon, that note which Estius† hath upon the blood of his Son, that in them there is a confutation of three heresies at once: the Manichees, who deny the truth of Christ's human nature, since, as Alexander said of his wound, *clamat me esse hominem*, it proclaimeth me a man, we may say of his blood, for had he not been man, he could not have bled, have died; the Ebionites, who deny him to be God, since, being God's natural Son, he must needs be of the same essence with himself; and the Nestorians, who make two persons, which, if true, the blood of Christ the man could not have been called the blood of Christ the Son of God.

That which I conceive here chiefly to be taken notice of is, that our apostle contents not himself to say the *blood of Jesus Christ*, but he addeth *his Son*, to intimate to us how this blood became available to our cleansing, to wit, as it was the blood not merely of the Son of Mary, the Son of David, the Son of man, but of him who was also the Son of God.

Indeed, that it was the blood of an innocent, pure, unspotted man, did much conduce to this work, since, had he been himself a sinner, he could not have cleansed us from our sins; and therefore our apostle in the next chapter, 1 John ii. 2, joineth these two together, 'Jesus Christ the righteous,' 'the propitiation for our sins;' and the apostle Peter, 1 Peter i. 17, puts these together as 'of a precious Lamb without spot and blemish.' To this purpose it is St Austin ‡ saith the blood, because it was the blood of him who had no sin himself, was shed for the remission of our sins; and

\* Vide Grot. de satisfact. Christi, c. i. ad finem.

† Vide Est. in loc.

‡ Aug. de Trinit. l. 3, c. 15.

\* Socin. in loc.

† Vide Socin de Servatore.



Leo\* suitably, the pouring out of a just man's blood for the unjust was effectual to our redemption.

But though this was a necessary qualification in this person who did shed his blood for this end, yet that which gave the efficacy and merit to his blood was the fulness of the Godhead which dwelt in him personally. Thus Damascene,† speaking of his deity, addeth, thence his passion became of a saving and quickening virtue; and St Cyril‡ expressly, his blood had not been a price for the world's sin if he had been only man. Indeed, Socinus§ asserts that the dignity of his person added nothing to the value of his sufferings, because the divinity itself did not suffer; but though the Godhead did not suffer, yet God-man did suffer, and he who endured the punishment *was God*, though he did not endure it *as God*. In these respects it is said, 1 Cor. ii. 8, they 'crucified the Lord of glory;' and God is said, Acts xx. 28, to purchase his church 'with his blood,' and here it is called the blood of Jesus Christ his Son; and we may as well say it is all one to kill a king as a beggar, a father as a stranger, because the mortal wound is directed against the body, not the dignity or affinity.

The sum then is this, Christ's deity being personally united to his manhood, giveth an efficacy to his sufferings. Hence it is that, his person being infinite, the worth of his blood is infinite, and so it became commensurate and adequate both to the infinite demerit of the sin committed by us, and the eternity of the punishment which was to have been inflicted upon us; and by the same reason that man's sin, being a finite act, yet deserveth an infinite punishment, because perpetrated against an infinite majesty, Christ's death, though a temporary passion, cannot but be infinitely satisfactory, because it is the death of an infinite person, Christ Jesus the Son of God, blessed for ever.

And now, what other use should we make of this but as both a looking-glass and an antidote?

1. In this truth, as in a looking-glass, let us see these two things, the heinous nature of our sins, and the unparalleled measure of Christ's love.||

1. View, O sinner, the heinous nature of thy sins, from which nothing but Christ's blood can cleanse thee. Sin, if looked upon in the glass of the law, cannot but appear sinful; but when beheld in the blood of Christ, it must needs appear beyond measure sinful.¶ *Ex consideratione remedii, periculi aestimo quantitatem*, saith St Bernard\*\* excellently; take notice of the greatness of thy disease and danger in the remedy prepared for the cure of the one and prevention of the other. Oh how great is that wound, which nothing could heal but the physician's death! The truth is, Christ's

\* Leo Ep. 83.

† Damasc. de fide, l. 3, c. 15.

‡ Cyr. de recta fide ad Reg.

§ Socin. de servat.

|| Peccati immanitas, Christi charitas.—Justin. in loc.

¶ Vide Gualt. hom. in ep.

\*\* Bern. de nat. dom. scim. 3.

blood in respect of sin is both aggravating and diminishing. Look upon sin in Christ's blood one way, and it appeareth not so terrible, because this blood cleanseth from it; look upon it another way, and it appeareth abominable, because it could not be cleansed but by this blood. Tell me, O sinner, why dost thou make nothing to defile thyself with that which cost thy Saviour so dear to cleanse thee from? How much rather should thy sins wring tears from thee, since they drew blood from Christ!

2. Behold, O sinner, the exceeding love of thy Saviour, who, that he might cleanse thee when polluted in thy blood, was pleased to shed his own blood. Indeed, the pouring out of Christ's blood was *erimum charitatis opus*, a super-excellent work of charity; hence it is that these two are joined together; and when the Scripture speaketh of his love, it presently annexeth his sufferings. So St Paul: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' so St John: Rev. i. 5, 'Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' We read, that when Christ wept for Lazarus, John xi. 36, the standers by said, 'See how he loved him.' Surely if his tears, much more his blood, proclaimeth his affection towards us. Thus may we see the bowels of his compassion through the wounds of his passion. The Jews were the scribes, the nails were the pens, his body the white paper, and his blood the red ink; and the characters were love, exceeding love, and these so fairly written that he which runs may read them. I shut up this with that of devout Bernard,\* Behold and look upon the rose of his bloody passion, how his redness bespeaketh his flaming love, there being, as it were, a contention betwixt his passion and affection: this, that it might be hotter; that, that it might be redder. Nor had his sufferings been so red with blood had not his heart been inflamed with love. Oh let us beholding magnify, magnifying admire, and admiring praise him for his inestimable goodness, saying with the holy apostle, Rev. i. 5, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, be honour and glory for ever.'

2. Make use of this truth as a cordial to revive thy drooping soul, in a time of inward affliction. It is the note of Eumenius† upon the text: 'Is any one affrighted with the light and sense of sin? Let this cleansing by the blood of Christ make him confident.' And to the like purpose St Austin: 'The devil hath put in a caveat, an handwriting against us, but let us be secure; the blood of Christ hath blotted it out.' Methinks I hear some wounded, broken sinner crying out in despair, Woe is me that ever I was born; my sins are for number innumerable, for measure unmeasurable, and I am not able to cleanse myself from any, no, not the least of them. Oh what mountains of grievous sins lie upon my back, that I am not able to

\* Bern. de pass. dom. c. 41.

† Vide Eumen. et August. in loc.

look up! Oh what scarlet-erimson bloody sins continually fly in my face, that I am not able to behold without desperation! Oh that I had never been, oh that I might be no more! Whither shall I fly, who carry my guilt still along with me? What shall I do to be eased of this oppressing burden? Ah, my sinful soul, what will become of thee? Vile wretch that I am, where shall I appear? But stay, thou despairing sinner; with poor Hagar in the wilderness, thou art crying, weeping, dying, whenas behold a well of water is by thee, a fountain of blood is opened for sin and for uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1. Thou dost well to bewail thy own sin, but thou dost ill to forget thy Saviour's blood. Thou sayest thou art a great sinner; true, else Christ needed not have shed his blood. Thou sayest thou art a great sinner; be it so, yet Christ's blood 'cleanseth from all sin.' And therefore is Christ's blood said to cleanse from all sin, because there is no sin so great from which it cannot cleanse.\* What if thy sins be clouds, thick clouds, yet the beams of this Sun of righteousness can dissipate them; what though they be mountains, yet this red sea can swallow them; what though they be scarlet sins, yet this scarlet blood can make them white as snow. View the catalogue of those sinners whom this blood hath cleansed, and thou shalt find 'fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners,' have been washed by it; 'for such,' saith St Paul to the Corinthians, 'were some of ye, but ye are washed,' 1 Cor. vi. 9, x. 11. Look once again, and thou shalt find a blasphemer, a persecutor (for such was Paul himself, 1 Tim. i. 15), nay, murderers, even those who had a hand in the murder of Christ himself (for such were those converts at St Peter's sermon, Acts ii. 35), cleansed mercifully by this very blood which they shed so cruelly. Sinners, this blood still as it were runs afresh, and the efficacy of it is as full now as it was at first; only remember that this blood which was shed cleanseth not unless it be sprinkled. So much David intimateth in that prayer: Ps. li. 7, 'Purge me with hyssop,' hyssop being that by which the blood of sacrifice was sprinkled, to which answereth faith, whereby our souls are sprinkled with this blood of Christ. The brazen serpent cured those who were stung with the fiery serpent, but not without their looking on it, John iii. 14. The blood of Christ can cleanse us from all our sins, but not without our applying it. Go then, O sinner, in a sense of thy own filthiness, to thy blessed Saviour; say to him with the leper, Mat. viii. 2, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;' with the father of the child, Mark ix. 24, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' Remember his gracious invitation to come, Mat. xi. 28, and his comfortable promise of ease, and

\* Dicitur Christus emundare ab omni peccato quia nullum est tam immane facinus quod Christi sanguine non potest elui.—Justin. in loc.

be not faithless, but believing. Nor needst thou mingle any water with this blood, popish penances, pilgrimages, indulgences, or any such like inventions of superstitious dotages; this blood alone can cleanse, and by joining anything with it, thou dost what lieth in thee to defile and debase this blood. To him then, and him alone, have recourse with a lowly, yet lively confidence, relying on the merits of his blood, which cleanseth from all sin.

2. You have seen the position in itself, be pleased now to look upon it in its reflection, on what proceeded; and thus we may consider it two ways:

Either as these words are an answer to some objection, which may be made against the preceding;

Or as the preceding words prevent a misapplication, which may be made of these.

1. Whereas the apostle saith in the former part of the verse, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,' it may be objected, though we now walk in the light, yet before we walked in darkness, and will not that hinder our communion? Nay, besides, though we walk in the light, yet we still fall into darkness, and will not that make a separation between God and us? To both these we have a clear answer returned in these words.

1. As for our past sins, committed before conversion, they shall not hinder this fellowship, 'because' (so *and* is sometimes taken, especially by St John\*) 'the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin;' to wit, as some expound it (truly, though not fully), all past sin. It is the promise of almighty God, made by Ezekiel, chap. xviii. 21, 22, that 'when the wicked turneth from his wickedness that he hath committed, all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned to him.' Indeed, the convert himself still penitently remembers them, but God mercifully forgets them; and why? The blood of Christ cleanseth from them. Whence by the way it is well observed by Zanchy,† that it is not our walking in the light cleanseth from our former works of darkness, but the blood of Christ. Our present obedience is not, cannot be, any compensation to God for our former disobedience, we now do no more than we ought to do, and therefore it cannot satisfy for our former doing what we ought not, and not doing what we ought to do; but the merit of Christ's blood both can and doth expiate our former guilt.

2. As for our present sins, whether continual infirmities, or our particular gross acts, into which we may fall, notwithstanding we walk in the light, from these, upon our repentance, the blood of Christ cleanseth, and so our fellowship with God continueth. It is true we cannot walk so exactly, but sin will cleave to us. Sin, in whomsoever it is, cannot but provoke God to separate from him. Ay, but the blood of Christ cleanseth us from our sins, whereby it is that we still

\* Et maxime apud Johannem causaliter usurpatur.—Lor. in loc.

† Zanc. ibid.



have fellowship with God. Thus doth this sentence at once both *infirmittatis nostræ nos admonere*, admonish us of our own weakness, and *adversus desperationem munire*,\* arm us against those fears which the sins we fall into by reason of that weakness may prompt us to, whilst we have still a refuge to fly to, a rock to lay hold upon, a plaster to make use of, even this blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin.

2. There is yet another relative consideration of these words, which would by no means be left out, as being that which may serve, like the angel's flaming sword, to keep off impenitent sinners from coming to the tree of life.

Brethren, this is a very comfortable doctrine which you have heard, of Christ's blood cleansing from all sin, and I doubt too many will be ready to lay hold on it to whom it doth not yet belong. When, therefore, you apply this comfort, take with you the condition, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.' And remember that this hypothetical proposition is equivalent to an exceptive: unless we walk in the light, the blood of Christ will not cleanse us. Hence then, impenitent, presumptuous sinners, here is bread indeed, but not

\* Calv. *ibid.*

for dogs; a pearl, but not for swine. The comfort of this text is precious, but not common; and though that his blood is able to cleanse all, yet it only will cleanse them that walk in the light. It is the strange conceit of many, that all is so done for them, that nothing needs to be done by them, whereas Christ's blood so cleanseth from sin, that we must walk in the light. It is the horrid presumption of some, that though they live in sin, they shall be cleansed by Christ's death, whereas his blood cleanseth only such as walk in the light. Oh, then, let us not deceive ourselves with vain hopes. Christ hath borne our sins, we must not therefore think to lay what load upon him we please; he only *taketh away* their sins who *cast away* their sins. Christ's death is a plaster for wounded sinners, but we must not presumptuously wound ourselves in hope that this plaster will cure us. Finally, Christ's blood is a rich treasure, to defray the debts of humble sinners, and to bear the expenses of such to heaven; but there is nothing allowed for wanton prodigals, who spend freely, and sin lavishly, upon the account of Christ's merits. And therefore, to end all, be sure in reading and applying to join the beginning of the verse with the end: 'If we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.'

#### SERMON XIV.

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*—1 JOHN I. 8-10.

THAT vision which Moses saw of a bush burning in the fire, Exod. iii. 2, is symbolically applied to instruct us in that most exquisite wisdom,\* the knowledge of God and ourselves, not unfitly, since flaming fire is a fit emblem of God's purity, and the thorny bush of man's iniquity.† This sight methinketh St John presenteth us with in this chapter. If you please to cast your eyes on the sixth verse, you may behold the fire, a delineation of God's holiness, who is light without any darkness; here in these verses you may meet with the bush, a declaration of man's sinfulness. It was the prayer of a devout ancient, *Domine noverim te, noverim me*, Lord, let know thee, let me know myself. This ought to be the prayer, the study of every Christian, to know God's purity, that we may admire him; our own impurity, that we may abhor ourselves. No wonder if St John, having acquainted us with the one, here minds us of the other: 'If we say we have no sin,' &c.

After the preface contained in the first verses, we

\* *Ignis in rubo symbolum est sapientiæ, quæ consistit in cognitione Dei et nostri.*—*Lap. in Exod.*

† *Vide Gualt. in loc.*

entered into the body of the epistle, wherein we have taken notice of the text and the commentary. The text, wherein is comprised the main subject of the whole epistle, is set down in the three preceding verses. That being handled, we are now to enter upon the commentary, as it is enlarged in the remaining part of the epistle. There are three principal terms in the text, to wit, fellowship with God through Christ, which is denied to them who walk in darkness, and assured to them who walk in the light. To one of these three (as will appear by the handling) everything in the following part of the epistle belongs. But that which our apostle begins with, and most insisteth upon, is walking in the light; his chief drift being to chalk out the steps of this way to divine communion, in which he often collaterally describeth them who walk in darkness. The words which I have now read contain one, and that which is both the first and the last, step of a Christian's walking in the light, namely, an acknowledgment of his sins, contrary to which they who walk in darkness, instead of acknowledging their faults, justify themselves as if they had no sin. For the more methodical handling of the words, be pleased to take notice in them of two general parts:

A confutation of the arrogant; begun in the eighth, ingeminated and amplified in the tenth, verse.

A consolation of the penitent; briefly, but fully, laid down in the ninth verse.

Begin we with the confutation, wherein we have considerable:

The truth implicitly asserted,

The error explicitly confuted.

The first of these will justly take up this hour's discourse. It is that which is, though implicitly, yet manifestly, asserted; and since according to that geometrical maxim, *Rectum est index sui et obliqui*, that which is straight discovereth not only itself, but that which is crooked; so by the clear apprehension of this truth, we shall the better discover the odiousness of this error.

The truth plainly laid down in these two verses is, that all men are sinners, and that not only before, but after, conversion; for if there be no truth, nay, God's word is not in them, who say they have no sin, it must needs be a true saying, and consonant to God's word, that all men have sin. It is a truth which, you see, consists of two parts, though the latter be principally here aimed at and chiefly to be insisted upon.

1. All men before conversion are in a state of sin. Thus St Paul saith expressly, Gal. iii. 22, that 'the Scripture hath concluded all men under sin.' Nor can we understand this note of universality too largely, it being true not only of all sorts of men, but all men of all sorts, that either have, are, or shall be. Indeed, all men by corrupted nature are so far from having no sin, that they have no good; and therefore that complaint of the psalmist, Ps. xiv. 1, is enlarged by the apostle, Rom. iii. 12, as true of all, both Jews and Gentiles, 'that they are all gone out of the way, they are become unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no, not one.' But the truth of this is so evident, that I shall not need to expatiate upon it.

2. All men, even after conversion, continue sinners. Indeed, by grace we cease to be wicked, but not to be sinners. It is the note of St Hilary\* upon these words, Ps. cxix. 118, 'Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes,' that we are not by them that err to understand all sinners, but wicked apostates; for if God shall tread down all sinners, he must tread down all men, because there is no man without sin.

That this truth is here intended and asserted by St John in these words, will appear if we consider,

1. The connection of this with the precedent verse, which evidently seemeth to lie thus: the apostle there affirmeth that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth them who walk in the light from all sin. Whereas it might be objected, on the one hand, that they who walk in the light have no sin, and therefore need not the blood of Christ to cleanse them, our apostle here

\* Si enim peccatores sperneret, omnes utique sperneret; quia sine peccato nemo est.—*Hilar. in Ps. cxviii.*

tacitly returneth answer, letting them know that even they who walk in the light are not altogether free from sin, and therefore have continual need of cleansing by Christ's blood. And whereas it will be said, on the other hand, if the benefits here mentioned stand upon such terms of walking in the light, as he is in the light, we who have darkness mixed with our light cannot hope to be partakers of them. Our apostle here preventeth it by acquainting us, that it was far from his intent by this phrase to exact unspotted purity, or a perfect freedom from all sin.

2. The persons in respect of whom he maketh this supposition, to wit, himself and the rest of the holy apostles. Indeed, I do not deny but that the aim of our apostle in these words was to confute those in his time who, living in wickedness, thought themselves pure; but withal it is manifest that the argument by which he confuteth them is drawn *a majori ad minus*, from the greater to the less. If we ourselves (St John and the other apostles) cannot say, much less might the Gnostics say that they had no sin, for doubtless the apostle would never have made the supposal in such persons, if it were not thus far true, that supposing even they should say they had no sin, they did but deceive themselves. And as his meaning at the 6th verse, by putting the reproof in his own person, is to assert that if he or any of the apostles should walk in darkness, and yet say they have fellowship with God, even they would be found liars, so it is his intention here to affirm, that if he or any of the apostles should challenge to themselves this immunity from sin, they would be found self-cozeners, yea, injurers of God himself.

This truth, which I am now to handle, hath met with many antagonists, and therefore I shall the more largely and distinctly unfold it in these ensuing propositions.

1. This non-exemption from sin is affirmed not only *de praterito*, but *de presenti*, in respect of time past, but present. Indeed, we find both tenses used by our apostle in this matter, the present in the 8th, the preterperfect in the 10th. Vorstius and Grotius in this (as in too many other places), tracing the footsteps of Socinus,\* would expound the former by the latter, as if the present tense used in the 8th verse were to be understood of the time past, the tense of which is expressed in the 10th, and so refer both to the state of Christians before their conversion to the faith; but I know no reason why we may not as well expound the 10th by the 8th as the 8th by the 10th. Besides, it is an usual Hebraism, which kind of phrase our apostle much followeth, to put the preterperfect tense for the present, *prateritum pro presentibus*;† and therefore it is more rational to expound those words, 'we have not sinned,' by these, 'we have no sin,' than these by those; and so this assertion is verified concerning all Christians, not

\* Soc., Vorst., Grot., in loc.

† Ambr. de Abr. lib. i. cap. viii.



only before, but after, conversion. And indeed this is not mine, but St Austin's,\* note upon the 8th verse. St John doth not say, if we say we had, but have no sin. Indeed, there are two places in this epistle, 1 John iii. 9, v. 18, which seem to contradict this construction of these words: the one, where he saith, 'He that is born of God cannot sin;' and the other not much unlike, where he saith, 'That which is born of God sinneth not.' What the full sense of these scriptures is, I shall (God willing) insist upon in their proper places; for the present, it may suffice to answer either with St Austin,† that he who is born of God sinneth not, to wit, as he is born of God. Regenerate men being therefore subject to sin, because but in part regenerate, and that holy men fall into sin, is because of the remainders of the old man, not so far as their natures are renewed. Or else, as St John seemeth to expound himself in the one place, that he who is born of God doth not sin, that is, doth not commit sin; which being a synonymous phrase with working iniquity, is only true of unregenerate persons. And in the other place, that he who is born of God sinneth not that sin of which he there speaketh in particular, namely, the sin unto death, notwithstanding which it still remaineth as a truth, that even they who are born of God cannot say they have no sin at all.

2. This total immunity from sin is denied not only of ordinary, but eminent, even the holiest saints that have been, are, or shall be. The *we* of whom my text speaketh were the apostles, who, as they were dignified in office above others, so no doubt they obtained greater measure of grace than others; yea, he that includeth himself in the number was St John, who of all the apostles was most beloved of Christ. And as St Austin‡ excellently, Who can say he is without sin, when he that leaned in the bosom of Christ saith, If we say we have no sin? Indeed, as Jehu wrote to the rulers of Israel in another case, 2 Kings x. 3, 'Look out even the best and meekest of your master's sons,' I may say in this, Look out even the best and holiest of God's children, and see if any of them can or dare wholly acquit themselves from sin. The truth is, as that fore-mentioned father § saith, If we shall ask all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, *de seipsis dum in hoc corpore degerent, una voce concorditer responderent*, they would with one consent say of themselves as living on earth in these words, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.' To this purpose is the observation of Beza and Zanchius upon the text. Consider who it is that here speaketh, and

that in his own person; who then can be excepted out of the catalogue? It is true there is one whom he calleth in the next chapter 'Jesus Christ the righteous,' who is most justly to be excepted. Of him it is said, Mark vii. 37, 'He did all things well.' Himself maketh the challenge, John viii. 46, 'Which of you can convince me of sin?' He was no doubt altogether free from the least spot or stain of corruption, but as for any other exception, this general rule admits none. I know the papists contend very earnestly that the mother might be exempted as well as the Son, asserting her to be free from all kind of sin. It is true St Austin\* in one place, speaking of the saints' sinfulness, doth except her, but not in their sense, as if she were not a sinner, but for the honour of Christ he would not have her mentioned as a sinner, and therefore elsewhere † he is clear and express, that all are sinners, except the one only mediator between God and man. Nor need we fear to injure the blessed virgin in joining her with the rest, whenas herself, calling Christ her Saviour, Luke i. 47, acknowledgeth herself to be a sinner. Indeed, that her conception of Christ should be without sin was needful, but that she herself should be without all sin was not necessary, nor doth the Scriptures or the ancient church affirm. Clement Alexandrinus is express,‡ only the Word is without fault; and St Basil,§ the Scripture beareth witness only to one, that he knew no sin; and Tertullian || expressly, our Lord commandeth his disciples to pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' as knowing himself only without sin. I shut up this with St Jerome's ¶ saying, 'If there be any who may attain to this state of perfect purity, he must be holier than any, nay, than all the apostles.'

3. This perfect freedom from sin is not denied *de futuro*, but *de presenti*, of the future, but only the present time. Our apostle doth not say, 'If we say we shall have no sin,' nay, it is an undoubted verity, there will be a time when we shall sin no more, yea, when sin shall be no more. As man in his created estate had a *posse non peccare*, a possibility of not sinning, so in his glorified condition he shall have a *non posse peccare*, an impossibility of sinning; but now, as in his fallen estate he cannot say he doth any good, so in his renewed condition he cannot say he hath no evil. Alexander Alensis\*\* starteth an objection of Pelagius, seemingly very acute, nay, solid, that either God would have us without sin, or he would not. To say he would not have us without sin, were to deny his nature, contradict his word, which calleth upon

\* Non dicit Joannes, si peccatum non habuerimus, sed habemus, &c.—*Aug. de Perfect. Justitie.*

† In quantum à Deo nati sumus non peccamus, &c.—*Aug. in Ep.*

‡ Quis sine aliquo peccato, sine aliquo vitio, cum clamet qui supra pectus Domini recubuit, &c.—*Aug. Ep. 29. ad Hieron.*

§ *Aug. contr. Pelag. Epist. ad Bonifac.*

\* Excepta sancta virgine, de qua propter honorem Domini nullam prorsus, quum de peccatis agitur, habere volo questionem, &c.—*Aug. de Nat. et Grat.*

† Excepto uno mediatore Dei et hominum, &c.—*Id. de perf. Just.*

‡ Cl. Al. pedag. lib. 2, c. ult.

§ Bas. Hom. de penit.

|| Tertul. de Orat. c. 7.

\*\* Alex. Al. pars 3. quest. 61, art. 5.

¶ Hieron. adv. Pelag.

us to sin no more. If he would have us without sin, then surely we may be so, since the divine will cannot be conversant about impossibilities. To which he returneth this answer, and that very aptly to our present purpose, God would have us without sin *quantum ad futurum statum*, as to the future, but not as to our present state. And if you desire a fuller untying of the knot, be pleased to know that,

(1.) *Voluntate præcepti*, God calleth upon us to be 'perfect as he is perfect,' Mat. v. 48; and requireth us to 'lay apart all filthiness,' James i. 21. Nor is it unjust for him to command that which we might once have done, but now through our own default cannot, and so is impossible, not *per se*, but *per accidens*, in its own nature, but accidentally; yea, in wisdom he commands men not to sin, though he know they cannot but sin, that in the disobedience he may punish not the *cannot*, but the *will not*,\* thereby glorifying his justice; and in the obedient he may reward the willing to do what they cannot, and so glorify his mercy. In a word, the design of these precepts is to teach us what we *ought*, not what we *can*; to set the mark before us which we must shoot at, though we cannot reach to it till we come to heaven. And therefore,

(2.) *Voluntate decreti*, God's decree is that we shall gradually come to perfection, and here endeavouring to attain, hereafter attain what we endeavour. To this purpose it is that the church, which Christ is said to 'present to himself, not having spot or wrinkle,' is called a 'glorious church,' Eph. v. 27: to intimate, saith Chemnitius † excellently, that then, and not till then, the church shall be without spot when she is glorious; and that is, when it shall be triumphant, and appear with him in glory.

4. This impeccability is not denied, as that which might not have been, but as that which, supposing God's counsel, cannot be. St Austin ‡ moveth the question, whether it be possible for a man assisted by grace to be without sin, and resolveth it affirmatively. Nor can it be gainsaid, but that, if God had so pleased, he might have restored his image to man perfectly at his first conversion, or he might have conferred such extraordinary grace (as a peculiar privilege) upon some particular men, whereby they should have been free from all sin. God neither hath commanded anything which was impossible in itself for man to do, nor is it impossible for God to assist a man fully to perform what he commands. But what need we dispute of God's power, when we know his purpose? Divine decree hath placed impeccability beyond the reach of any mere man in this life; there cannot be any one named that hath been, and we may surely conclude there never will be any one on whom such a preroga-

tive shall be conferred.\* From hence St Jerome hath well reasoned against Pelagius, † It is in vain to assert such a power, which never is reduced into act; and to say a man may do that which yet no man could ever do, yea (as he doth), to say a man might be without sin if he would, when the blessed apostle crieth out, 'The good I would do, I do not; and the evil I would not do, I do,' Rom. vii. 19, is foolish and absurd, yea, heretical and impious.

5. There is a great deal of difference between these two phrases, *habere peccatum*, and *haberi a peccato*, ‡ to have sin, and to be had by sin. To the one is required only the presence, to the other the dominion of sin. There are many that can say, nay, all truly regenerate persons may say, they are not had by and under the possession of sin, but yet they cannot say they have no sin remaining in them. The weakest Christian is not under the reign, and the strongest is not without the being of sin; *aliud est non habere peccatum, aliud non obedire desideris*, § it is one thing not to have sin, and another not to obey sin. He that obeyeth any sin, and yet saith he is a saint, deceiveth himself; and he that is a saint, should he say he had no sin, would but deceive himself likewise.

6. It is not a possibility of freedom from gross, scandalous, enormous sins which is here denied, but from any sin whatsoever. St Gregory maketh a distinction between *crimen* and *peccatum*, || that though every crime is a sin, yet every sin is not a crime; and proportionably many in this life are without crime, but not without sin. To the same purpose St Jerome asserts, ¶ that a man may be without that which the Greeks call malicious wickedness, and yet not free from sinful spots. And not much unlike St Austin, where he saith, It is one thing to be without sin, and another to be without blame.\*\* We may read of men without crime, without blame, but of none without sin. It is the apostle's counsel to the Philippian, chap. ii. 15, that they should be 'harmless, without rebuke;' and, accordingly, it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6, that they 'walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.' And no doubt there are many godly men who lead such lives that the world cannot tax them, nor they themselves, with any known gross wickedness, but still they want not infirmities cleaving to them. When therefore St Paul

\* τὸ παντελὲς ἀναμάρτητον ὑπὲρ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν ἔταξεν ὁ Θεός.—Gr. Naz. hom. jact. patr.

† Hier. adv. Pelag. dial. lib. 1. Id. ad Chesiph. adv. Pelag.

‡ Aug. de Nat. et Grat. lib. 6, c. 2.

§ Id. in Ep. ad Gal.

|| Hoc inter peccatum distat et crimen, quod omne crimen peccatum, &c.—Greg. Mor. lib. 21 c. 2.

¶ Absque vitio, quod græce dicitur κακία, hominem esse posse, ἀναμαρτητον, i. e. sine peccato, esse neminem.—Hier. adv. Pelag. dial. lib. 2.

\*\* Aliud est esse sine peccato, aliud esse sine quereclâ, &c.—Aug. de perfect. Just.

\* Aug. de peccat. merit. et remiss. lib. 2. Id. de perfect. Justit.

† Chemnit. exam. Concil. Trident.

‡ Aug. de peccator. mer. et remiss. lib. 2.



saith of the saints, that they are free from sin, it is an inchoate, not a consummate, liberty, and a freedom from great, not all sins, as St Austin appositely.\* The truth is, to be without sin is the holiness of heaven; to be without gross sin, the holiness of earth.

7. It is not a possibility of freedom from this or that particular sin, but from all sin, that is here denied. There are several sins which godly men may say they have not; nay, there is not any one particular great sin which a man may not, through divine assistance, be able to avoid; but to say, 'we have no sin at all,' in no kind nor respect, were arrogancy in the holiest person. This is the position of that great schoolman,† A man may shun any sin in particular, but not sin in general; and his instance excellently illustrateth it. If there be an hundred leaks in a ship, it is easy to stop any one of them, but difficult to stop them all. We may be, in a great measure, and in many respects, but not in all, free from sin, till the resurrection of the flesh.‡

8. Lastly, these two expressions, the one of *having sin*, the other of *having sinned*, are not improbably referred by interpreters, the one to original, and the other to actual, sins; and, accordingly, I shall demonstrate the truth of this doctrine in respect of both.

(1.) If we say we have no sin (that is, no original sin) remaining in us, we deceive ourselves. That our apostle here intends original sin, is probable, because he useth the singular number, *sin*, not *sins*, as if it were some special sin he pointed at; and likewise because of the phrase of *having*, which intimateth that he speaketh of that sin which is, as it were, habitual and innate in us.§ It is not unworthy our observation, that Christ, speaking to his own disciples, Mat. vii. 11, calls them evil; and St Hilary's note upon it,|| is, that the reason of this appellation was in respect of that common stain of natural corruption which did still adhere to them. Indeed, we all, bringing sin with us into the world, cannot be without it whilst we are in the world.¶ It is the apostle's expression, 2 Cor. iv. 16, that we must be renewed daily; and it is St Austin's gloss,\*\* that, therefore, we are but in part renewed, and so the old man is still abiding in us. Indeed, according to that known elegant expression of St Bernard, this sin is weakened, but not plucked up; cast down, but not cast out; subjugated, but not

\* Id. in Joh. tr. 41.

† Alex. Al. p. 3, quæst. 62, art. 5.

‡ Ex multis partibus potest esse, ex omni non nisi in resurrectione carnis.—*Aug. expos. in ep. ad Gal.*

§ Notanter dicit *ἔχων*; propriè ergo loquitur de peccato ut ita dicam *ἔχων* habituali et perpetuò renatis inherenti.—*Ger. loc. com. de peccato.*

|| Per conditionem communis nobis originis, &c.—*Hilar. ibid.*

¶ Sine culpâ in mundo esse non potest qui in mundum cum culpa venit.—*Greg. hom. 39. in Evang.*

\*\* Profecto qui de die in diem renovatur adhuc nondum totus est renovatus.—*Aug. de peccat. mer. et remiss. lib. ii. cap. 7.*

extirpated in the best of God's saints.\* Hence the doleful sigh and sorrowful complaint of the holy apostle, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?' knowing (saith that devout father†) that he should not be loosed from the root of bitterness, law of sin, till he was loosed from his body. Nor could this sin, which separateth between God and us, be separated from him, till his soul was separated from his body.

It may be here objected, what is by the Romanists asserted, that concupiscence in the regenerate is no sin; and so, though they have concupiscence, yet not therefore sin. To insist upon this controversy would be a digression; it is enough, that whilst they only account it *panam* and *fomitum*, a punishment of sin, and, as it were, the fuel of sin, St Paul no less than fourteen times calleth it by the name of sin, in the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters to the Romans.

It may, perhaps, further be objected, what is generally agreed to, that baptism becoming an instrument of regeneration, washeth away original sin; and, therefore, why may not regenerate baptized persons say, they have no original sin? But the school's answer to this objection is very full, that sacraments are administered to the person, and therefore the person is free from the guilt, whilst yet still the nature is defiled with the stain of original sin. And whereas it may be retorted, that if the sin remain, the guilt cannot be abolished, guiltiness being an inseparable adjunct of sin, I answer, that the *reatus simplex*, guilt abstractively considered, is not taken away; but as *redundans in personam*, concretively considered, it is taken away; so that this guilt shall not be imputed to the person, whilst yet there are some remainders of the sin in him, so that he cannot say truly he hath no sin, to wit, no original corruption.

(2.) If we say we have not sinned by actual transgressions, we deceive ourselves. That expression of the prophet, Isa. xxxii. 13, 'Upon the land of my people shall come up briars and thorns,' is not unfitly moralised by St. Gregory to this purpose,‡ since the briars and thorns of iniquity are to be found growing in the land of God's people, the hearts and lives of God's saints. Excellently to this purpose saith Leo,§ Who is found so void of fault, that there is not in his life what justice may blame and mercy pardon? It is the position of Solomon, in his prayer, 1 Kings viii. 46, upon his supposition, 'If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not;' and the assertion of St James, including himself in the number, who yet was called James the Just, James iii. 2, 'In many things we offend all;' yea, our blessed Saviour pre-

\* Bern. in Ps. Quis. hab. Serm. 10.

† Id. de advent. Dom. Serm. 6.

‡ Greg. mor. lib. xvii. cap. x.

§ Quis invenietur ita immunis à culpâ ut in eo non habeat vel justitia quod culpet, vel misericordia quod remittat?—*Leo epiph. Serm. 7.*

scribeth it as part of a form of prayer for his own disciples, 'Forgive us our trespasses;' and, as St Cyprian well noteth,\* to check any high conceits of our sanctity, he mindeth us of our daily sins, for which we have need daily to ask pardon.

Indeed, as St Gregory aptly, we must know there are some faults not to be avoided by the most righteous persons. Such are those *delicta quotidiana incurisionis*, as Tertullian† calls them, sins of quotidian incurision, to which all men are subject. Yea, in respect of these, it is St Ambrose‡ his complaint, *Unusquisque nostrum per singulas horas quam multa delinquit!* in how many things do every one of us offend every hour! No wonder if St Cyprian assert, § *opus est nobis quotidiana sanctificatione*, we have need of renewed sanctification; that as we sin daily, so we may be daily purged by repentance; nay, that the wise man makes the challenge, Prov. xx. 9, 'Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' We can neither ascribe what purity we have to ourselves, nor yet attribute perfection to our purity.

To illustrate this more distinctly, consider,

1. Even the external conversation of the best men is not exactly pure. The life of a Christian is as it were a book: his birth the title-page, his baptism the epistle dedicatory, his years the leaves, and his actions the lines in those leaves; and there are some lines in the leaves of the fairest life, which, by reason of their *errata*, are *legenda cum venia*, to be looked upon with a favourable eye, since, if God should examine our acts with a severe eye, woe would be to the most commendable life, as St Augustine excellently.||

2. Put the case that a man were free in respect of his external actions, yet who is free from internal motions? Though thy hands were perfectly clean, yet thy heart is not.¶ To be free from all titillations and motions, is not for this life, which is a continued temptation. That expression of our Saviour, John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed need not, save to wash his feet,' is fitly alluded to by St Bernard\*\* for our present purpose: 'He is washed, whose head, that is, his intentions, and hands, that is, his operations, are clean; but our feet, which are lusts and affections, whilst we walk upon the dust of this world, continually need washing.'

3. And yet further, though one might arrive at such a state of perfection, as to say with St Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 4, 'I know nothing by myself;' yet, as he saith of himself, he 'could not thereby be justified.' Indeed, it is most probable, that the apostle there speaketh only in respect of the discharge of his calling, concerning which he knew nothing by himself for which he was blameworthy; but take it in the

largest extent, that he knew nothing by himself in the present bent of his heart and course of his life, yet he, as well as David, and so every saint, hath reason to pray, 'Cleanse me from secret sins,' Ps. xix. 2; many things being sins, which yet we know not to be so, and there being much filth and uncleanness in our hearts, which, by reason of their deceitfulness, we are not able to discover and find out.

4. Finally, our holiest services are full of infirmities, so that, if we say we have not sinned in the best duty that ever we performed, we deceive ourselves. This was visibly represented, where Aaron the high priest, a type of Christ, was to 'bear the iniquity of their holy things,' Exod. xxviii. 38; and it is not improbably conceived as the assertion of Solomon, when he saith, Eccles. vii. 20, 'There is not a just man on earth that doth good, and sinneth not,' that is, who sinneth not in the good he doth; yea, it is the confession of the church, Isa. lxiv. 6, 'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' Upon which St Bernard,\* 'Our righteousness, though upright, is not pure, unless we think ourselves better than those who uttered those words;' and Gerson upon the same scripture,† infers, 'Who dare, then, boast of his righteousness before God?' No, brethren, there is a worm in our best fruits, dross in our purest gold, smoke in our brightest fire, spots in our most beautiful and splendid performances. Our graces are not without their defects, our duties not without their defaults. Who finds not his knowledge dim, his faith weak, his love cold, his zeal remiss? Who may not complain of dulness, deadness, wanderingness in his devotion? Who ever could say, he loved God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his might, and with all his strength? *Et hoc vitio non est justus super terram*,‡ by reason of this defect no man can be perfectly just upon earth; for though a negative imperfection (such as there was in Adam as created, if compared with God) be no sin, yet a privative imperfection (such as is now in our best righteousness) undoubtedly is. It is no fault for a thing not to be so perfect as another is, but it is a fault for a thing not to be so perfect as it ought to be; and, therefore, because no grace existing in us ariseth to that degree, no duty performed by us exactly according to the manner which God's law requireth, it must needs be a sin. Where, then, it is said of any person by God himself, that they are righteous, as of Noah, Job, and others, it is to be conceived, saith the learned Chamer,§ as a testimony given of them according to the indulgence of mercy, not the rigour of justice; and where the works of godly men are called good works, though they are absolutely called good works, yet they are not absolutely good, since, as St Gregory saith of himself,||

\* Cypr. de orat. dom. † Tertull. de pudicit.

‡ Ambros. de Apolog. David. § Cypr. l. d.

|| Aug. Confess. lib. ix. cap. xiii.

¶ Leo de quadrages. Sermon. 3.

\*\* Bern. Sermon. de cenâ dom.

\* Bern. Sermon. 5. de verb. Isaiaë.

† Gers. de consol. lib. iv.

‡ Aug. ep. xxix.

§ Cham. de operum imper. lib. xi. cap. xxii.

|| Greg. Mor. lib. viii. cap. 8.



so may every saint, My evil actions are purely evil, but not so my good actions. Indeed, we must distinguish of sins *per se* and *per accidens*. The good actions of wicked men are not sins in themselves, but as performed by them. We must further distinguish between sinful actions, and sin in an action. The good works of the godly are not sinful works, but yet they have sin in them; so that, to sum it up, the best actions of bad men are turned into sin, and the best actions of good men are accompanied with sin; so that none can say, no, not in respect of their good duties, We have not sinned. And yet I do not hereby assert, what some do too rigidly, that a man sinneth in every action he doth. There are some actions done by men that are not human, but natural, and those cannot be said to have sin in them; besides, there may be in a renewed man some sudden emanations of the will as regenerate, antecedencies to the conflicts and lustings of the will as corrupt, and those may be conceived as sinless; but still all deliberate actions must needs have some sin cleaving to them.

As for those doctrines, therefore, which assert a possibility of keeping the law, of an unerring estate in this life, I say (as Jeremiah upon Hananiah's prophecy of the speedy deliverance to the Jews, chap. xxviii. 6), 'Amen, the Lord do so.' Oh that we might be so perfect! But still I must assert with St Austin,\* it is a state *magis optandus quam sperandus*, to be desired, yea, and endeavoured, but not to be hoped for in this life; and here with St John, 'If we say we have no sin; if we say we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves.'

To apply this doctrine. It is worthy to be considered by three sorts of persons: the wicked, the weak, the strong.

1. Let wicked men take heed how they abuse this doctrine. It is too usual a consecratory which ungodly wretches draw from these premises. If the best cannot say they have no sin, no wonder if we commit sin; and they think it a sufficient excuse for their flagitious wickedness, Every one has his faults, would you have us chaster than David? soberer than Noah? Have not the godliest fallen into sin? So that, as we may say of many rich men, it were happy for them if they did believe that error of Pelagius to be true, an impossibility of rich men's salvation, since it would divert them from earth to heaven, whereas, because they may lawfully care for the things of the earth, they care for nothing else; the like we may say of many wicked men, it were happy for them they did believe Pelagius his error in this particular to be true, that men might be without sin. Sure, because they hear no man can be without sin, they think themselves safe enough, though they live in sin. But, O thou foolish sinner, knowest thou not that, though no man can be without notes, yet good men are without beams? They have infirmities, but they are free

\* Aug. de perf. Just.

from enormities. Knowest thou not that though no man can be altogether without sin, yet he is best that hath the least? And every good man striveth to his utmost against all sin; and, therefore, take heed how thou cheat thyself with these false reasonings.

2. Let weak saints hence comfort themselves against the stirrings of their lusts, the sense of their infirmities, and their daily frailties, which they find accompanying them. It is too usual with tender consciences to be too harsh to themselves; and because they find much sin, to conclude that they have no grace. Indeed, it is good to be jealous of our own hearts, still to suspect our graces, our duties, lest they be counterfeit; but withal, we must take heed how we censure them to be counterfeit, because they are imperfect. There may be good gold where there is much dross, burning fire hid under many ashes, and the truth of grace may be in that heart which is sensible of various and strong lusts; indeed, these burrs of sinful corruption, as they cleave to us, so they should prick us; our manifold imperfections and infirmities should be the matter of our grief, but not of our despair. We cannot be too bitter against our sins, even the least; yet we must not be too severe against ourselves, because of those lesser sins which we cannot be rid of. If the holy prophets, apostles, martyrs, could not, whilst on earth, say they had no sin, no wonder if thou groan under the weight of many sins.

3. Let strong saints be hence admonished to be,

(1.) Lowly in their own eyes. That God will not have his saints altogether free from sin in this life, is not *opus impotentia*, but *sapientia*, from want of power, but abundance of wisdom; and one special reason why the godly have sin still adhering to them, is to keep them humble and poor in spirit. Indeed Pelagius scoffs at this as a great absurdity, that sin should be a means to prevent sin, as if fire could put out fire; but St Anstin answereth him fully,† that it is no unusual thing for a chirurgeon to cure a grief by causing grief; putting his patient to pain, that he may remove his pain; and we may answer him in his own instance, that fire is the way to fetch out fire. The truth is, it is not the remainder of sin, but the sense of those remainders, which is a means to humble us, and abate that spiritual pride which is too apt to arise, even from our graces; and look as grace accidentally causeth the sin of pride, so our sins accidentally cause the grace of humility. When, therefore, we are at any time apt to pride ourselves in our gay feathers, let us look upon our black feet; and as with one eye we behold the good that is done by us, so with the other, the evil that remaineth in us.

(2.) Charitable towards their brethren. 'If thy brother be overtaken in a fault, restore him with a spirit of meekness,' Gal. vi. 1. Give to thy neighbour's actions the allowance of human frailty, and be

\* Vitis neme sine nascitur, optimus ille qui minimis uretur.—*Place*. † Aug. de nat. et grat. cap. 28.

not too rigid in censuring other men's faults. If they offend in one thing, perhaps thou art more guilty in another; if they fall to-day, thou mayest to-morrow. The same corruption that hath led another aside, is still in thee, and (if grace withdraw) will soon prevail over thee; indeed, if you practise the former duty, you will soon learn this, pride and censoriousness are ever companions, and he that is lowly in his own esteem will be charitable towards others.

(3.) Watchful over their own hearts. Indeed, he that carrieth gunpowder about him had need beware the least sparks of fire. What cause have we to take heed of every temptation, who are at best so prone to be led into it? 'Happy is the man' (saith Solomon) 'that feareth always.' No doubt he sinneth least that most feareth lest he should sin. It is Job's saying of himself, chap. ix. 23, according to the vulgar Latin, *Verebar omnia opera mea*, 'I did fear all my works.' Let the best do so, fear themselves in all their actions, lest they should fall into sin.

(4.) Frequent in prayer to God. 'For this shall every one that is godly pray to thee,' saith David, Ps. xxxii. 6.\* For this! What? Because of his sins. And who? Not the wickedest, but the godly, in this respect have cause to pray. And for what should he pray? Surely for renewed pardon, for increase of grace, and for the perfection of glory. We cannot say we have no sin. Oh then let us pray with David,

\* Vide Aug. *ibid.*

'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!' where there is a double emphasis observable, it is not *ab hoste*, but *à seruo*. Though God's servant, yet he would not have God to enter into judgment with him. And again, *ne intres*, it is the very entrance into judgment that he dreads and prayeth against; not only do not *proceed*, but do not so much as *enter*. When we have done our best, we have need to crave for mercy. Again, we cannot say we have no sin; let us pray for more grace,\* that we may every day have less sin. So doth Paul in effect, when he confesseth himself not to have already attained, but resolveth to reach forward. We must never cease to hunger and thirst after greater measures of righteousness, till we are wholly and perfectly without any stain of sin; and therefore we must continually say with the apostles, Luke xvii. 5, 'Lord, increase our faith,' and all other graces of thy Spirit in us. Finally, since we cannot now in this life say we have no sin, how should we pray and sigh, and long to be possessed of that future felicity? Indeed, in this respect only it is lawful and commendable to desire death, that we may be free, not from pain or misery, but from sin and iniquity. Upon this ground we may, we ought, and the stronger we are in grace, the more earnestly we should groan for the day of our perfect redemption, when we shall be clothed with unspotted purity, perfect felicity, and that to all eternity. Amen.

\* Vide Hier. *adv. Pelag.* Aug. *de lit. et Sp. e.* xxxvi.

## SERMON XV.

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.—1 JOHN I. 8, 10.*

IT is one of the sage counsels which the wise man giveth, Prov. iv. 17, 'Turn not to the right hand nor to the left, remove thy foot from evil;' the genuine and literal sense whereof, no doubt, is, that we must keep the straight way which God hath chalked before us in his word, not in the least declining on either hand. But withal there are several allusions and profitable applications made of these words by the ancients. Hugo\* taketh the right hand as an emblem of prosperity, to which we must not turn, by being too much lifted up, and the left hand of adversity, which we must not turn to, by being too much cast down. Venerable Bede† resembleth by the right hand, curiosity, to which we must not turn, by being wise above what is written; and by the left hand, folly, to which we must not turn, by giving ourselves up to its dictates. Once more to our present purpose, according

\* Declinare ad dexteram est prosperis efferris, ad sinistram adversis deprimi.—*Hug.*

† Declinare in sinistram est stultitiæ se dedere, in dextram plus sapere quam sapere oportet.—*Bede.*

to St Austin.\* To turn to the right hand is, by saying we have no sin, to deceive ourselves; to turn to the left hand is to go on in sin, and yet think ourselves safe, and our condition happy. Both these our apostle warneth us of in this chapter; and it is not mine, but Aretius his observation, where he saith the king's highway lieth betwixt two extremes,† the one whereof is to will a continuance in our sins, the other to acquit ourselves from having any sin. The former of these, which is *secura delectatio peccati*, a secure delight in sin, is that which is sharply reprov'd at the sixth verse, which calleth those liars who walk in darkness, live in wickedness, and yet boast of communion with God. The latter of these, which is *superba justitiæ presumptio*, proud presumption of our own righteousness, is no less severely condemn'd in these verses, letting such know how vainly they cozen them-

\* In dextram declinare est seipsam decipere dicendo se esse sine peccato, &c.—*Aug. de Peccat. mer. et remiss. l. ii. c. xxv.*

† Via regia deducit inter duo extrema, &c.—*Aret. in loc.*



selves, and highly they injure God, 'If we say we have,' &c.

Having already despatched the first branch of the confutation, which is the truth implicitly asserted, proceed we now to the second, which is the error expressly refuted; for the handling whereof be pleased to observe these two things:

The opinion wherein the error consists; and that is set down in the beginning of the eighth and the tenth verses, 'If we say we have no sin,' 'If we say we have not sinned.'

The arguments by which it is refuted, and dissuaded; drawn from

The folly of it, in that 'we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,' ver. 8;

The impiety of it, in that 'we make God a liar, and his word is not in us,' ver. 10.

Begin we with the opinion itself, which we see is not singly mentioned, but ingeminated, as if our apostle would hereby insinuate that it is at once both a very common and very dangerous disease, no less spreading than deadly, infecting in some degree or other the greatest part of men, of Christians.

The manner of committing this moral error is *saying*, which refers both to the tongue and the mind. Saying is not only peculiar to the lips; every thought is interpreted by God a saying; the heart may cry when the tongue is silent, and we may say when we do not speak. Hence it is, that though this be not our open assertion or outward protestation, yet, if it be our inward thought, our secret imagination, we shall be found guilty before God. The truth is, this error is managed several ways: some say it with their tongue, and not with their heart; they cannot but be convinced of their own hypocrisy, and yet boast of exact purity; their consciences secretly nip them with the sense of guilt, yet they pretend to the highest form of saintship. Some say it with their heart, and not with their tongue; they are not so impudent as to profess it, yet they proudly conceit it; yea, whilst with their lips they say in general they are sinners, they think themselves pure. Finally, some say it both with heart and tongue. The conceit is so strongly fixed in their minds, that they are not ashamed to utter it, proclaiming themselves to be without sin. And all these are here included; so that if we say it with either, or both, we are among the number of those who are here charged.

The matter of this error is a denying that we have sin, or that we have sinned, which yet is capable of a double construction:

Either that we have not sinned in respect of this or that particular action. Thus, when we deny the fact as not done by us, like that adulteress, Prov. xxx. 20, who wiped her mouth and said, I have done no evil; or, acknowledging the fact, we deny it to be a fault, and that we have sinned in doing it, as Jonah, who said, 'I do well to be angry,' chap. iv. 9, we

run into this error. And surely if it be bad, *non dicere Peccavimus*, not to say we have sinned by acknowledging, it is far worse, *dicere Non peccavimus*, to say we have not sinned by justifying our faults.

Or that we have not sinned, yea, have no sin at all in our whole course; that our ways are right, our doings pure, our conversation unblameable, not only before men, but God. This is that which our apostle here no doubt chiefly intendeth, and therefore in this sense I shall handle it.

That there are such, and that in all ages, who soothe up themselves with such conceits, is no difficult matter to demonstrate. Solomon the wise observed it in his time, when he said, Prov. xxx. 12, 'There is a generation of men that are pure in their own eyes, and yet they are not washed from their filthiness;' in very deed they were filthy, and yet in their own eyes they were pure. They did nothing but sin, and yet said they had no sin. And truly, what generation of men hath there been wherein this generation hath not been? Yea, it is not improbably observed, that therefore he calls them a generation, because they have still succeeded one after another, as generations do. Indeed, there are two things to which hypocrites are very prone, to say they have those graces which they have not. So did the church of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17, say she was 'rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing;' yet she was 'poor, and blind, and naked.' To say they have not that sin which they have; so did the Jewish church, against whom the prophet Jeremiah declaimeth, chap. ii. 25, 35, for saying, 'I am not polluted, I have not followed Baalim;' and again, 'I am innocent, therefore the anger of the Lord is turned from me.' Our blessed Saviour, speaking of the pharisees, calls them the whole, when he saith, Mat. ix. 12, 'the whole need not the physician, but the sick:' not that they were so in reality; no, they were full of bruises and sores, but in their own apprehension conceiting themselves to be free from that soul-sickness and spiritual disease of sin. To the same purpose it is that elsewhere he calls them the 'just ones, which need no repentance,' Luke xv. 7. These self-justiciaries, imagining themselves to have no sin, thought that they needed no repentance. Of the same arrogant temper was that young man in the Gospel, Mat. xix. 20, who said to Christ concerning the commandments, 'All these have I kept from my youth;' since to keep all the commandments is as much as to be without sin, there being no sin where there is no breach of the law.

This opinion the Gnostics, against whom St John especially levels this confutation, had concerning themselves; as if they only were the perfect Christians, and fancying that they were no more polluted by the wickedest actions, than the sunbeams are by the dunghill. Of this tribe was Novatus and his followers, concerning whom St Cyprian saith,\* that he thought

\* Cyp. de Novat.

himself and his disciples to be gold, whenas in truth they were brass, or as the father's phrase is, golden calves. Not much unlike to these were the Cathari, who had that name given them from the high estimation they had of their own purity, whilst they were full of poison, and therefore are compared by Epiphanius to the basilisk,\* which, though a venomous creature, hath a royal name. Little better are the antinomians, who account repentance a legal duty, affirm that God seeth no sin in them, nay, are so audacious, as to say they are as righteous as Christ. And yet worse are the familistical ranters of this age, who impudently assert, that whatsoever they do is no sin; and all these say at least in effect, they have no sin; for you must know that a thing may be said two ways, formally or interpretatively, directly or indirectly; and thus, as the atheist saith there is no God, not only when in plain terms he denieth a Deity, but when he denieth to God those things which are the essence of a Deity. In which respect, to say God is not true or just, or omniscient, is to say there is no God, Ps. xiv. 1. So the justiciary saith, he hath no sin; not only when he saith it expressly, but when he saith that which amounts to as much. In which regard, to say we keep the commandments, we need no repentance, God beholds no sin in us, whatsoever we do is no sin, is all one with saying we have no sin; and as although there are few, very few, who flatly deny a Deity, yet many who do it by a circumlocution, so, though there are but few who deny themselves to be altogether without sin, yet (as appeareth by what hath been already said) there are many who say that which is virtually to deny it, and so are justly chargeable with the opinion which our apostle here declaimeth against, 'If we say we have no sin.'

Having in some measure discovered wherein this opinion consists, it remaineth that we now proceed to manifest the erroneousness of it, that we may be dissuaded from it; and to that end consider we the arguments which our apostle here useth, of which,

1. The first is the folly of it, in that by so saying, 'We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;' where we have two expressions, the one principal, the other collateral, annexed by way of confirmation. The point our apostle layeth down is, that in saying we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; and the proof he adjoineth is, because there is no truth in those that say so.

1. In saying we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. This self-conceit is a self-deceit. It is at first view a strange assertion, that a man should deceive himself. If a man would deceive, it were more probable he should deceive an enemy than a friend, a stranger than a kinsman, one that is afar off than near to him; nay, there is inbred in every man a love of himself; yea, *proximus quisque sibi*, every one is nearest to himself; and is it to be imagined, that he

\* Epiphanius. Adv. Hæret. tom. i. hæret. xlix.

would deceive himself? For a man to kill another, may sometimes be (at least be accounted) valour, but to kill himself can be thought no other than madness; for a man to deceive another, may, by worldlings at least, be esteemed craft, policy, wisdom; but for a man to deceive himself, must needs be adjudged mere folly; and yet thus it is with all wicked men, to whom, by reason of corruption, it is natural to be unnatural, whilst by doing what is sin, they kill themselves, and by saying they have no sin, they deceive themselves. Indeed, as the prophet Jeremiah saith, chap. xvii. 9, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' There being a 'mystery of iniquity' in our corrupt minds, the heart is sometimes in Scripture metaphorically described by the belly, Prov. xx. 17; and truly there are not more twistings and foldings in the guts of the belly, than there are turnings and windings in the heart of man, by which we are too, too witty to cozen ourselves. No wonder if the wise man saith, Prov. xxviii. 16, 'He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool;' and that it was the prayer of St Austin, *Custodi, libera me de meipso, Deus!* Lord, deliver me from myself! *Μέμνησο ἀπιστεῖν*,\* is an excellent rule, remember to distrust, especially thyself; and ever keep a narrow watch, and a jealous suspicion, over the dictates of thy own heart, which is so prone to deceive thee.

Among those many things whereby we are apt to deceive ourselves, none more frequent than this which our apostle here specifieth, whereby we are well conceited of our own innocency. The truth is, we have such an inordinate self-love, that it is no wonder we fall into self-flattery. They say in optics, that if the object be too near the eye, we cannot rightly discern it. We are very near and dear unto ourselves, and therefore it is we discern not the sins that are in ourselves: 'Every way of man,' saith Solomon, 'is right in his own eyes,' Prov. xxi. 2. Indeed, therefore, it is right in his own eyes, because it is his own way. The eye which seeth all other things beholdeth not itself. Hence it is, that whilst we spy motes in others, we see not the beams in our own eyes, and so deceive ourselves, in saying we have no sin.

Indeed, there want not other impostors, who are ready enough to put tricks upon us. The devil, that old serpent, that grand juggler, is very busy to delude us, and that in this kind; it is his great design to make us believe those things not to be sin which are so, and to think ourselves not to have those sins we have. Besides, the world, a cunning deceiver, is very willing to soothe us up in a good opinion of ourselves. Nay, there want not false teachers, cheaters rather, who persuade their followers (at least) that they are the saints, the pure, the godly party; whereas they act those things which even heathens would blush at. But the truth is, were it not for ourselves, none of these could deceive us; were we faithful to our own

\* Epictet.



souls, they could not betray us. We are willing to be deceived, yea, to deceive ourselves in the matter of our own goodness, and that because,

2. The truth is not in us. Indeed, wherever there is deceit there is falsehood; since to be deceived is to apprehend a thing otherwise than it is, or to take a thing to be that which it is not. True, there must be some show of truth,\* it must seem to be that which we take it to be, or else how should we be cheated? But there is no reality nor truth of the thing, else it could not be a cheat. Will you know, then, how men come to say they have no sin? They seem so in their own eyes, and thereby deceive themselves; but, indeed, it is not so, there is no truth in their conception, and so it must needs prove a deception. Look as when a man deceiveth another, it is by a verbal or a real lie, presenting that which is not; so it is when a man deceiveth himself, in which respect one expounds this negative by the positive of lying, the truth is not in us; that is, we lie to ourselves,† in saying we have no sin.

It is not unfitly here taken notice of, that our apostle doth not say, There is no humility, but there is no verity in us. Indeed, one cause why we deceive ourselves in saying we have no sin, is the pride of our spirits. A proud man hath only one eye open, both in respect of his neighbour and himself: of his neighbour, he hath one eye to see his spots but not his beauty, his faults but not his gifts; of himself, he hath an eye to see his beauty but not his spots, his gifts but not his faults, and so becometh a self-deceiver. In this regard our apostle might justly have said, there is no humility in those who say they have no sin. Indeed, as St Austin,‡ occasionally speaking of those words, Eccles. vii. 16, 'Be not righteous over much,' and understanding it of a self-conceited righteousness, truly asserts, it is not *justitia sapientis*, but *superbia præsumentis*, the righteousness of the wise, but the pride of a presumptuous man. But that it may appear that that which causeth even the holiest to accuse themselves of sin, is not only the lowliness of their minds, but the truth of the thing; and that according to St Cyprian's speech,§ he that thinketh himself innocent is not only proud, but foolish, yea, in plain terms, a liar; therefore he saith, 'There is no truth' in us. It is the question of the wise man, Prov. xx. 9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' and such a question, to which none can return an affirmative answer. Who can say it, and say it truly, and not be untrue in saying it? since both to ascribe that purity which we have to ourselves, and to ascribe that purity to ourselves which we have not, are manifest and odious untruths. To this purpose it is, what Beza

observes,\* that these words are spoken by St John, not only for modesty, but truth's sake; yea, a council† hath pronounced an anathema against any who shall assert that this was spoken only in humility, but not because so in truth. Suitable to which is St Austin's note upon these words,‡ St John doth not say, If we have no sin, we extol ourselves, and there is no lowliness in us, but we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. Since thus to say is not only to lift up ourselves with an high conceit of that purity which we have, but to flatter ourselves with a mis-conceit of that purity we have not.

To explicate this clause in its fullest latitude, know there is a double truth, which may be denied to those who thus say: truth of grace in their hearts, and truth of knowledge in their minds.

1. There is no truth of grace in our hearts, if we deceive ourselves by saying we have no sin. It is the note of Ghislerius,§ occasionally upon these words, that the sense of this clause is as much as, We defile ourselves by this conceit, and it argueth a want of truth and sincerity in us. St Austin acknowledgeth it an heinous sin,|| that he did not account himself a sinner. Nor is there a surer brand of hypocrisy than this foolish arrogance; indeed, good men are sometimes apt to deceive themselves in a contrary way, by denying the grace of God which is bestowed upon them, saying in the bitterness of their souls, they have no faith, no love, no repentance, when yet, both in the sight of God and others, these graces appear to be in them. It is a self-deceit, which must be taken notice of, and avoided as an act of ingratitude; but yet it is an error of the right hand, and therefore the more tolerable; but this which my text speaketh of is of another nature, and that which only wicked men are subject to, who, though they live in sin, yet deny sin to be in them. Sincere Christians oftentimes think themselves worse, but only hypocrites think themselves better than they are, and so being just in their own eyes, they become unjust.

2. But that which is the genuine sense (as hath been already intimated) is that there is no truth of knowledge in our minds. Truth in the mind is the congruous and adequate conceit of the understanding to the thing; and therefore this conceit being not adequate, but opposite, not congruous, but contrary, to the thing, is justly charged with falsehood.

This will the better appear if we look into the rotten foundations of this perverse opinion, which are no other than misapprehensions, misconstructions, or false reasonings. The word which St James useth for deceiving ourselves, James i. 21, is very significant to

\* Bez. in loc.

† Quisquis sic accipiendum putat ut dicatur propter humilitatem, non quia ita verè est, anathema sit.—*Milevit. Concil.*

‡ Aug. de Nat. et Grat. c. xxxiv.

§ Ghisler. in Jerem.

|| Aug. Confess. l. v. c. x.

\* Decipimur specie recti.—*Hor.*

† Veritatem non esse in aliquo est aliquem mentiri.—*Zanch. in loc.*

‡ Aug. Sent. 365.

§ Cypr. de Opere et Elcemos.

this purpose, *παρалоγιζόμενοι*, which is to deceive ourselves by false argumentation. This is very evident in this self-deceit my text speaketh of, which is grounded, not upon syllogisms framed by reason, but paralogisms made by fancy. Thus this conceit that we have no sin is in,

1. Some, from a misunderstanding of the nature of divine concurrence to human actions, as if because 'in him men live, move, and have their being,' therefore whatever they do, God doth it in them, and so they can have no sin; not distinguishing between the physical entity and the moral obliquity of the action, nor considering that he who maketh an horse to go doth not therefore make him to halt in his going.

2. Others, from a strange fancy of I know not what nature within us, distinct from us, to which our sins are to be attributed, and so we are acquitted. Such were those *falsi et fallentes sancti*, deceived and deceitful saints, of whom St Austin speaketh,\* who said it was not they that sinned, but another nature within them, whereas St James saith, chap. i. 14, 'When a man is tempted, he is drawn aside of his own lusts.'

3. Many, from a misconceit of what is sin, whilst they think nothing is in its own nature evil, but only according to men's opinions of it; so that what St Paul saith concerning meats, Rom. xiv. 14, they say of actions, 'I know, and am persuaded by our Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.' This was, as Irenæus informeth us, the lying doctrine of the Gnostics and Carpocratians, whence they concluded that nothing they did was sin, not considering that not our opinion, but God's law, is the rule both of good and evil.†

4. Too many from a misapprehension of the nature of justification, as if it were an utter extinction, whereas it is only a non-imputation of sin as to punishment; as if because Christ is made to us of God righteousness, so far as to cover us from his revengful, therefore it must be also from his omniscient eye; as if because we are made righteous by Christ, we must be as righteous as Christ; whereas our apostle here plainly tells us, that though Christ's blood cleanseth us from all sin, yet we cannot say we have no sin.

5. Very many from a misconstruction of the true meaning of the law. St Paul saith of himself, Rom. vii. 9, that he was 'alive without the law,' to wit, in his own opinion, before the law came to him in a right representation. No doubt that which made the pharisees think themselves pure, and the young man brag of his obedience, was that they knew not the spiritual intent and comprehensive extent of the laws. And truly thus it is still with many civil and moral justiciaries, who think themselves careful observers of the law, and are ready to answer for themselves to every commandment. They think they fulfil the first, in that they only acknowledge the true God; the

second, in that they never bowed to an image; the third, in that they do not use to swear by God; the fourth, in that they are constant goers to church on the Lord's day; the fifth, because they honour and respect their natural parents, give the minister good words, and wish well to their king; the sixth, because they never killed any man; the seventh, because they are no whores nor rogues; the eighth, because they never cut a purse, or broke open a house, or robbed on the highway; the ninth, because they never gave in false evidence to the judge or jury; and the tenth, because they were never sick for Naboth's vineyard: not considering that the law in every precept doth not only forbid a sin, but command a duty, and that it doth not only reach to the outward work, but the inward thought; to the act itself, but the attendants, occasions, and whatsoever hath affinity with it.

Indeed, besides these, it were easy to reckon up many more mistakes which are in men's minds about the corruption that cleaveth to their natures; the examples of those who are abominably vile, the success and prosperity God is pleased to vouchsafe them in their ways, all of which will be found, if weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, very light; and therefore, since this saying we have no sin is itself a misconceit, and ariseth from false reasonings, well might our apostle say of such, 'There is no truth in them.'

And now what improvement shall we make of all that hath been said of this particular, but to dissuade us from this vain, false, wicked deceiving ourselves with an opinion of our own righteousness? Alas, though thou deceive thyself, thou canst not cozen God: thou thinkest thyself fair as Absalom, he seeth thee foul as Thersites; whilst thou esteemest thyself amiable, thou art in his sight a leper, a leazar, full of sores. The truth is, thou art never a whit the less, nay, thou art the more sinful in God's, because thou art sinless in thine own. Besides, it is no less than thy soul's welfare that is endangered by this deceit; and how great is that danger! We account that patient desperate on whom a mortal disease is seized, and yet he saith he is not sick. Is not this thy case? Thy soul is spiritually sick, and thou knowest it not. This conceit is that which at once both hindereth our repentance and pardon, and therefore must needs be extirpated. He that is not sensible of his sickness will not seek after a remedy, nor will he that saith he hath no sin look out for a pardon. All reproofs, threatenings, admonitions, have no influence upon his spirit; he feareth no punishment, but goeth on securely. And indeed by this means he is without the compass of pardon; as St Augustine\* and St Bernard† excellently, presumption of our own dignity excludeth divine mercy; and he that denieth he hath sin doth not

\* Qui negat se habere peccatum non hoc agit ut peccatum non habeat, sed ut veniam non accipiat.—*Aug. de civit. Dei.* l. 13.

† Excludit miseræ dissimulatio misericordiam, nec dignatio habet locum ubi fuerit præsumptio dignitatis.—*Bern.*

\* Aug. conf. l. 5, c. 10. † Iren. adv. hæres. l. 1, c. 24.



make himself the less sinful, but the less capable of forgiveness. Nay, let me add this, that though thou mayest thus deceive thyself for a while, yet the time is coming when thou shalt be undeceived, to thy shame, and horror, and confusion. It is the threatening of almighty God to the sinner, that thought God was like him, sinful, Ps. l. 21; and it belongs as well to him that thinketh he is like God, sinless, 'I will set thy sins in order before thee.' Who can express what horror seized upon ruined Babylon, which had said, 'I sit as a queen, I shall see no evil'? The like shame shall sit upon the face of hypocrites, which say they have no sin, when God shall set their sins in order before them.

Oh, then, be not so injurious to yourselves as to harbour this self-deceit. You think it self-love, but indeed it is self-hatred, there being no worse enemy than a seeming friend, a base flatterer. And that you may no longer be thus deceived, be true to your own selves, and labour to have your minds enlightened, your judgments rectified, that you may pass sentence upon yourselves according to truth. Be much in examining yourselves, searching your hearts, trying your ways, and that impartially. The truth is, we deceive ourselves, because we do not see ourselves; we do not see ourselves, because we do not search ourselves; and we cannot search ourselves unless we have the candle of divine illumination. Pray we therefore that the eyes of our understanding may be opened, and thereby the truth of saving knowledge conveyed into us, that we may no longer be such fools as to deceive ourselves by saying we have no sin; and this so much the rather, because it is not only an injury to ourselves, but to God; which leads me to the,

2. Second argument, which is the impiety of this opinion, in that hereby we make God a liar, and his word is not in us; and this is represented by a double character, to wit, the blasphemy and the infidelity of those who say thus: their blasphemy, in that they make God a liar; and infidelity, in that his word is not in them.

1. *We make him a liar*, a very vehement and urgent expression. How earnest is our apostle in confuting this error.\* Indeed, this phrase at first reading may seem harsh, the thing which it asserts being in a proper sense impossible, *We make him a liar!* It cannot be. 'God is not a man, that he should lie; or son of man, that he should repent,' saith Balaam, Num. xxiii. 19; and again, it being 'impossible for God to lie,' saith the author to the Hebrews, chap. vi. 18. Indeed, if God should either do what is evil, or speak what is false, he could not be a God. But, beloved, though God cannot be a liar, we may be said to make him so, not really, but interpretatively, when we do as much as lieth in us to make him so. Look as an adulterer, 'looking upon a woman to lust after her,' though *she* be not defiled, is said to 'commit

\* Magna verborum vehementia propositum urget.—*Ver.*

adultery with her in his heart,' Mat. v. 28; and as apostates are said to 'crucify the Son of God afresh,' Heb. vi. 6,—not that he who is possessed of his crown can again be brought to his cross, but that such sinners do what in them lieth to bring him to it;—so self-justiciaries, though they cannot justly fasten the least lie upon God, yet they do what they can to make him so. Perhaps, indeed, this is not that which they directly intend, but yet it is that which must necessarily follow upon their saying, and therefore this brand is justly fastened upon them.

This will further appear, if we consider what God hath said, both in his law and in his gospel. His law accuseth all men of sin, his gospel offereth pardon of sin to all men; so that law and gospel affirm (at least implicitly) that all men have sin. If therefore (as they say) they have no sin, God must be a liar in both. Indeed, the *dilemma* is manifest, either they must be liars, or God; their saying must be false, or God's, since there is an apparent contradiction between them. God saith *all men have sinned*, and they say *we have not sinned*; no marvel if our apostle charge them with making God a liar.

See hence at once both the pride and the danger of these pharisaical hypocrites: their pride, in that rather than accuse themselves of sin, they dare to accuse God with lying;\* and lest any blot should lie upon their purity, they go about to stain God's veracity. Thus, as it were, inverting those words of St Paul, Rom. iii. 4, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar,' they say, Let God be a liar, so we may be pure and true! How dishonourable, and therefore provoking, this must needs be to God, we may guess by ourselves. Our proverb saith, the lie deserveth a stab. We cannot in words offer a man a greater injury than to give him the lie; and can we think that God himself doth not take it as an high affront from those who go about thus to make him a liar? Yes, certainly, and all such proud wretches shall know it as an evil thing to cast so great a dishonour upon God; and whilst they condemn God unjustly as a liar, he will one day condemn them justly as liars, in deceiving themselves, and having no truth in them, yea, as blasphemers, in making him a liar; and as unbelievers, in that,

2. *His word is not in them*. By word here some understand Christ, who is called at the first verse 'the Word of life;' and so his Word is not in us, inasmuch as Christ is not in us if we thus say. This is the rather observable, because many who say they have no sin pretend to have Christ in them, and be in Christ; yea, that therefore they have no sin, because Christ is in them, and they in him, whom the apostle, according to this construction, here plainly contradiceth. And, indeed, it cannot be otherwise, since wherever Christ is, there is his Spirit; and

\* Dum non vult hypocrita se accusare peccati, mavult Deum accusare mendacii.—*Zanch.*

where the Spirit of Christ is, there is a divine light discovering to a man the darkness that is in him, and effectually convincing him of his own sinfulness. But though this be a truth, I do not conceive it the truth of this clause, and therefore with the generality of the best interpreters,\* I understand it in the proper and usual sense, not for Christ the Word, but for the word of Christ; not the Word which is God, but the word of God. And thus it will not be amiss to consider this clause both in itself and in its reference.

1. Consider this clause in itself; and that which we have to inquire is, what our apostle meaneth by this phrase. Negatives are best known by the affirmatives, as privations are by habits, and therefore by knowing what it is for the word of God and Christ to be in us, we shall learn what this meaneth, the word is not in us.

The word is then said to be in us, when, according to Christ's phrase in the Gospel, John viii. 37, it doth 'take place in us,'\* *χωρῆσω*, being there, according to Camerarius, as much as *χωρῶν ἐξείν*, and findeth entertainment with us; and surely then it taketh place in us, when it taketh place in our hearts,† as it did in David, who said, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart.' The word is then said to be in us, when, according to St James his phrase, chap. i. 21, it is *λόγος ἔμψυτος*, 'an ingrafted word,' and that is, whenas the tree being opened, a graft is set deep into it, and so becometh one with it, or rather it one with the graft. So our hearts being opened, as Lydia's was, Acts xvi. 15, the word is deeply imprinted in it, and sweetly closeth with the word. If yet more particularly you ask how this is done, I answer in one word, By believing. When the mind giveth a clear assent, and the will a full consent, to the word, then it is received by and dwelleth in us. So interpreters paraphrase *Non amplectimur, non intelligimus, non retinemus veram ejus doctrinam*: his word is not in us; that is, we do not understand and embrace by faith the true doctrine of his word. And that this is St John's meaning in this place, we need no other expositor than himself in his Gospel, where he bringeth in Christ, saying, John v. 38, 'Ye have not his word among you, for him whom he hath sent you believe not,' thereby plainly intimating, that, to have his word abiding in us, is to believe in his word. Look how Christ himself is said to be and to dwell in us; so is his word. Now the apostle Paul's expression, Eph. iii. 17, is full of Christ's 'dwelling in our hearts by faith.' Indeed, on Christ's part the Spirit, and on our part faith, maketh the union between him and us; and both these concur to the inbeing of the word, when the word is received as St Paul saith of the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 5, 'in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,' to wit, of faith.

\* Vide Est. Zanch. Menoch. Illyr. in loc.

† Quid est ergo non capit in vobis? Non capit cor vestrum, &c.—Aug. in Joh. tr. 42.

To end this, be pleased to know that there is a great deal of difference between these two, his word *among us*, and his word *in us*. His word is among us when published and made known to us, but it is not in us unless received and believed by us; and therefore, my brethren, let us not content ourselves with the former, but labour to find the latter. It is very observable what St Paul saith of the Colossians, chap. i. 5, 'The gospel is come unto you, and bringeth forth fruit in you,' which it could not do were it not ingrafted; and therefore the author to the Hebrews saith of the Jews, chap. iv. 2, 'The word did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it.' O beloved, it may be truly said of us, the gospel is come to us, but is it in us? Doth it bring forth fruit in us? St Austin excellently compareth the word to an hook,\* which then taketh the fish when it is taken into the fish; so the word, when it is taken into us by faith, then taketh us, and that not to our ruin, but safety. And St James, when he speaketh of the word as 'able to save our souls,' calls it the 'ingrafted word,' to teach us how necessary it is to our spiritual and eternal profit by the word that it should be in us. The truth is, it were far better never to have had the word among us, than not to have it in us; that this light had never shone in the midst of us, if it be not set up in the candlestick of our hearts. And, therefore, let it be our prayer, that the gospel may come to us, 'not in word only, but in power;' that the seed of the word which is sown and scattered among us may be hid in us; finally, that it may please God to give unto us increase of grace, that we may hear meekly his word, receive it with pure affection, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

2. But further, consider this clause in its reference; and ye shall find, according to a several reference, several things not unworthy our observation.

It is not amiss to compare the end of the eighth and of the tenth verse together. In the one it is said *the truth* is not in us, the other, *his word* is not in us; and if, as doubtless we may, we look upon these as synonymous phrases, we may observe that what he calleth truth in the one, he styleth God's word in the other; and so it amounts to that which our blessed Saviour himself elsewhere asserts, John xvii. 17, 'Thy word is truth,' in which respect it is called by St Paul, Eph. i. 13, Col. i. 5, and St James, James i. 18, 'the word of truth,' and that was *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, eminently and primarily. Indeed, it may be said of many words that they are true, but only God's word is the word of truth, yea, truth itself. Consonant to this it is that the psalmist calls the words of the Lord pure words, and compareth them to silver 'purified in the fire seven times,' Ps. xii. 6; that is, fully perfect, so as there is not the least dross of error in them. Indeed, when we consider whose word it is, namely,

\* Sic est sermo Dei; csc debet fidelibus sic ut pisci hamus, &c.—Aug. tr. 42 in Joh.



his word, who, as he is the first being, so he is the first truth, we cannot but conclude, that it must needs be altogether true; and therefore, if we would have an answer to Pilate's question, John xix. 11, *What is truth?* the text giveth it, It is God's word; and if you would know when doctrines are true, this word is the only sure touchstone; and therefore the prophet Isaiah calleth 'to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light (to wit, of truth) in them,' Isa. viii. 20.

2. If we put these two clauses together, *we make him a liar, and his word is not in us*, we learn how heinous a sin infidelity is, in that it puts so high a dishonour upon God as to make him a liar. This clause, *his word is not in us*, manifestly is added as a confirmation of the former; therefore we make him a liar because his word is not in us; and his word is not in us when it is not believed by us; so that not to believe God's word, and to make him a liar, are all one. Hence it is, that our apostle in his Gospel saith, John iii. 33, 'He that believeth sets to his seal that God is true;' and elsewhere in this epistle, 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth not God, maketh him a liar, because he believeth not.' Look as among men, if we tell a man we believe not what he saith, we in effect tell him he is a liar; so when we do not receive the truth of God's word, we put as it were the lie upon God. And now

tell me, how inexcusable, nay, abominable is the sin of infidelity: inexcusable, because that which we are required to believe is no other than truth; and abominable, because by not believing we make God a liar.

3. Lastly, put the beginning and the end of this verse together, *If we say we have not sinned, his word is not in us*. Every self-justiciary, as St Austin's phrase is, *contrarius est divinæ scripturæ*,\* is so far from having God's word in him, that he is directly contrary to God's word; and so to say we have no sin, appeareth to be no other than an odious and damnable error. If, then, we would not be infected with the poison of this error, let us always have by us, nay, in us, that powerful antidote of God's word; let us be careful to study that we may understand it, and by it our own sinfulness; let us often behold ourselves in it, as in a glass, which knoweth not how to flatter. So shall we no longer deceive ourselves and dishonour God by saying we have no sin. And so much shall suffice to be spoken of this confutation. Let us, every one, make it our supplication, that the word which hath now been heard by us with our outward ears, may through God's grace be grafted inwardly in our hearts, to bring forth the fruit of an holy life, and withal of a lowly mind, to his praise and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

\* Aug. de perfect. justit. cap. 32.

## SERMON XVI.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*  
—1 JOHN I. 9.

THERE are two sorts of persons, among others, observable in the church, namely, *gloriosi* and *infirmi*, presumptuous hypocrites and weak saints. Those are commonly lifted up with an opinion of their own righteousness, these are usually cast down with an apprehension of their own sinfulness;\* those boast themselves to be the best of saints, and these abhor themselves as the worst of sinners; finally, those think themselves to have no sin, and these account themselves to be nothing but sin. Hence it is, that God's ministers, though they must not be double-tongued, yet must speak in different languages: to the arrogant, words of terror; to the penitent, words of support; must use both hands, with the right hand lifting up them that are cast down, and with the left hand casting down them that are lifted up. Of both these our apostle sets us a pattern in the three last verses of this chapter, lancing the sores of proud justiciaries with the knife of reproof, in the eighth and tenth verses, and pouring oil of comfort into the wounds of humble confessors in the tenth verse: 'If we confess our sins,' &c.

\* Vide Aret. in loc.

Not to trouble you with multiplicity of divisions, be pleased to observe in the words three generals:

I. A duty, conditionally required in those words, 'If we confess our sins.'

II. A mercy annexed to that duty, in those, to 'forgive us our sins,' and to 'cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

III. The certainty of that mercy, demonstrated in those, 'he is faithful and just.'

These are the three boughs of this tree of life, out of each of which sprout so many branches, and groweth so much fruit that it will ask many hours the gathering. At this time I shall enter upon the,

I. Duty conditionally required, for the handling whereof, be pleased to consider it two ways, as it is,

1. *Materia præcepti*, the matter of a commandment;
2. *Conditio promissi*, the condition of a promise.

In the former, I shall unfold the nature and exercise of this duty, wherein it consists, how it is to be managed.

In the latter, I shall discover the necessity and utility of it, as being that whereof the absence excludes, and the presence includes, forgiveness.

The former will be as the directive part, instructing you in, and

The latter as the persuasive part, exciting you to, the performance of it.

1. The despatch of the first consideration will lie in answer to four questions.

(1.) What it is which we are to confess.

(2.) To whom this confession must be made.

(3.) How this confession must be performed.

(4.) Who they are that must thus confess.

*Quest.* 1. What it is we are to confess; the answer to which is in these two words, *our sins*; and there are three steps by which I shall proceed in the handling of it. *Sin, sins, our sins*, must be confessed by us.

[1.] *Sin* must be confessed. Divines do not unfitly take notice of a threefold confession, *fidei, laudis, peccati*, of faith, of praise, of sin; a declaration of the truth we believe, mercies we receive, sins we commit. The first is an act of courage, the second of gratitude, the last of repentance. Concerning all of these, the word in the text is used by St Paul, Rom. x. 10, in reference to the confession of faith, where he joineth 'believing with the heart,' and making 'confession with the mouth,' together; by the author to the Hebrews, chap. xiii. 15, in reference to thankfulness, where this very word is rendered 'giving thanks;' and by St John here in reference of sin, 'If we confess our sins.'

It is that indeed which both sin and the sinner very much shun. Sin is so ugly that it loveth not to appear, and being a work of darkness, cannot endure the light; besides, the sinner is so much in love with his sin, that he is not willing to bring it forth. That expression of the prophet Hosea, chap. x. 13, 'You have ploughed wickedness,' is rendered by the Septuagint, *παρεσιωπήσατε*, you have concealed wickedness; and not unfitly, because the end of ploughing is that the seed may be cast into and hid in the ground. This is the practice of wicked men, to keep close their sin, to hide their talents in the napkin of idleness, and their sins in the napkin of excuse. Indeed, it is a disease our first parents were sick of; no wonder if we be infected, and therefore Job's expression is, chap. xxxi. 33, 'If I have hid my sin as Adam.' If we are not so proud as to say we have no sin, yet we are not so humble as to say we have sin; with the pharisee, we can brag what sins we are not guilty of, but we will not confess the sins we are guilty of. Men love, as St Austin's phrase is, \* *clamare merita, but tacere peccata*, to proclaim their good, but conceal their evil deeds; vain glory puts them upon the one, but shame forbids them the other. Indeed, when sin is to be committed, shame is absent; and when it is to be confessed, shame is present. †

\* Aug. in Ps. xxx.

† Næ tu verecundiâ bonus ad delinquendum expandens frontem, ad deprecandum subducens.—*Tertul. depœnit.* cap. x.

Oh, take we heed of this shameful shame in hiding our sins, which is at once both cursed and vain. *Non pudenda peccati confessio sed perpetratio*,\* it is a shame to act sin, but not to acknowledge it. Shame is a good bridle to keep from sin, but a bad cover to hide it. St Bernard † calls it a foolish, dishonest, injurious modesty. Thou art not ashamed to defile thyself, and yet thou art ashamed to be made clean; indeed, it is a shame whereof thou hast reason to be ashamed, since, as it doth much hurt, so it can do no good. As to that which thou desirest, all excuses are but fig-leaves and paper-coverings. Wicked men, as St Ambrose ‡ saith excellently, in *affectu habent abscondere, non in effectu*, desire to hide, but cannot fulfil it. God, saith our apostle, is light, and therefore there is no concealing or darkening anything from him. The reason, saith Tertullian, § why God commands us to confess our sins, it is not that he may know them, but that it may appear we know and are sensible of them. Oh, then, let me say to you (to use St Gregory's moral ¶) as Christ did to Lazarus, Come forth, by the confession of your sins. I beseech you (in the words of an ancient ¶¶), by that God to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom nothing is hid, that you do not skin over your wounded consciences. That of the psalmist, Ps. xxxvii. 5, 'Commit thy way to the Lord,' is rendered by the vulgar, *Revela viam Domino*, reveal thy way; and by St Ambrose, understood of revealing our sins to God. Indeed, since it is impossible to cover, why should we not discover, our sins? Conceal not that which God knoweth already, and would have thee to make known. It is a very ill office to be the devil's secretary. Oh, break thy league with Satan by revealing his secrets, thy sins, to God.

[2.] As sin in general, so *sins* in particular must be confessed. An implicit confession is almost as bad as an implicit faith. It is not enough to acknowledge our sins by wholesale, but by retail. True it is, a general confession may be penitent. Such no doubt was the publican's, Luke xviii. 13, when he said, 'God be merciful to me a sinner;' but a penitent will not content himself with a general confession, and, therefore, St Paul, as in one place, he calleth himself at large a sinner, so in another, 1 Tim. i. 13, 15, he particulariseth his sins of blasphemy, and persecution, and injury against the saints. Thus doth a true penitent sit, or rather kneel down, to draw his own picture in all its black lineaments. To this purpose it is well

\* Theod. de provid. lib. x.

† Bern. ep. 185. Fivolè nimis tegmen quæris, anima misera, &c. Gotfrid. Tilman, in Gen. c. iii.

‡ Ambros. in Ps. cxviii. Serm. 21.

§ Tertul. de pœnit. c. vi.

¶ Veniat foris mortuus, i. e. culpam confiteatur peccator. —*Greg. in Evang. lom.* 26.

¶¶ Rogo vos per illum Dominum quem occulta non fallunt desinite vulneratam tegere conscientiam, &c. —*Pacian. parœn. ad pœnit.*



observed\* on the text, that our apostle doth not say, *Si confiteamur nos peccatores, sed peccata nostra*, if we confess ourselves sinners, but if we confess our sins, whereby is intimated a particular acknowledgment of those sins whereof we are guilty.

To open this more fully, I shall enlarge it in a threefold variation: we must confess our sins in respect of their number, measure, merit.

*First*, In confession of sin, we must enumerate the several sins which we have committed. As he in the Comedian said, that he had invited two guests to dinner, Philocrates, and Philocrates, a single man, but a double eater, so shall every man by examination find himself, though a single person, to be a double, nay, a treble, sinner. Confession, what is it but a setting our sins in order; and that is to be done by a distinct and particular enumeration. In this case, as Samuel said to Jesse, 1 Sam. xvi. 11, 'Are here all thy children?' so we must conceive that God saith to us, Are here all thy sins? and as good not confess any, as not bring forth all. Indeed, this must be understood with this limitation, so far as we know and can remember. There are some sins which we act, and know not that they are sins; there are other sins which we have perhaps so often committed, that we are not able to remember them, and surely what we cannot either know or remember, it is impossible to recount; so that particular confession must reach only to known sins, and in those to the kinds and the actings only, so far as we can call them to mind. And yet more especially, if the sins wherein we have walked, or which we have acted, have been scarlet crimson sins; for so we find the Israelites particularising idolatry, Judges ii. 10, and David his murder, Ps. li. 13, and Shechaniah, the people's unlawful mixtures in marriage, Ezra x. 3. Briefly, though we cannot exactly recount all our sins, yet we must not wilfully omit any sin in our confessions, there being the same reason of confessing all as any, because every sin is an offence to God, and a breach of his law.

*Secondly*, In confession we must aggravate our sins by confessing, not only the kinds and acts (so far as we remember), but the circumstances of our sins. Indeed, as Pelbartus well observeth,† there are some circumstances of sinful actions which are impertinent, and neither lessen nor heighten our sins; these are not to be mentioned. There are other circumstances, which may somewhat lessen our sins; but those a penitent will not much insist on; only those circumstances which do heighten his sins, or by their badness change the kind of his sin, and render it of a more heinous nature, he is careful to acknowledge. When a man confesseth his sin, he becometh a witness against himself, and therefore he must, on the one hand, confess nothing but the truth (for though as

Job sacrificed for his sons upon an *It may be they have sinned*, Job i. 5, so a man may charge himself before God upon suspicion; yet he is not to accuse himself of what he is not guilty); and, on the other hand, he must confess all the truth, and keep back nothing which may aggravate his fault. Indeed, it is our great fault in our confessions, we perhaps spit out some sins, but others we hide under our tongues; we acknowledge something of our crime, but yet we would make the best of it we can. If the sinner do not say, *Non feci*, or *Non male feci*, I did not do the fact, or I did not ill in doing it, yet he is too often at *non multum malè*, it was not very ill done. Methinks that of Aaron is very observable to this purpose, who, in confessing the idolatry of the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 34, useth a mincing expression, 'There came out this calf'; as if it had happened rather by chance than art, and there were little or no fault in him. But the temper of a true penitent is far otherwise: he looketh upon his sins as the greatest enemies; nor can a malicious person so spitefully set forth the faults of his enemy, as he will his own. Besides, he knoweth that extenuating sin aggravates, and aggravating extenuateth it, that as a charitable man gathereth by scattering, so a penitent lesseneth his sin by acknowledging it great. Hence it is that the confessions recorded in Scripture, are full of exaggerating expressions (as may appear in those of David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, and Ezra, chap. ix. 6, and Daniel, chap. ix. 5), setting forth not only the nature, but the greatness of their sins.

*Thirdly*, Finally, in confession we must acknowledge the guilt and desert of our sins, not only what we have done unjustly, but what we deserve to suffer justly. Thus we must confess, as our sins, so the punishment due to us by reason of those sins; how we deserve to be stripped of all God's mercies, and to have all the curses written in his book inflicted on us. This is that the Scripture calls a judging ourselves, 1 Cor. xi. 31, when we do not only arraign and accuse ourselves unto God by a confession of the fault, but judge and condemn ourselves by a confession of the punishment; and so we find in Daniel's acknowledgment, not only 'we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly,' but 'to us, O Lord God, belongeth confusion of face, as it is this day,' Dan. ix. 5, 7, 8.

[3.] Once more, as sins, many sins, so *our sins*, must be confessed. It is St Austin's note upon those words of David, 'I acknowledge my iniquity,' *non intueor alios*, I do not pry into other men's faults to publish them, but I acknowledge my own offences.

To enlarge this in a threefold consideration; we must confess,

*First*, Our own sins principally. Indeed, we find the people of God confessing public as well as private sins; the sins of their princes, their priests, as well as their own; not only the sins of their contemporaries, but their progenitors, 'We have sinned with our fathers,' Ps. cvi. 6; but still they chiefly insist upon

\* Μη ἀμαρτωλοὺς καλοῦμεν ἑαυτοὺς μόνον, &c.—Chrysost. Hebr. c. 12. Bellarm. de pœn. l. 3 c. 4. Zanch. in loc.

† Pelbart. do confess.

their own sins. When God's servants confess the sins of others, it is upon one of these two reasons: either because they have been theirs, or lest they should be theirs. [Sometimes other men's sins become ours, and fit it is that, as we have been partakers with them in their sins, we should be in repentance; and if they do not, yet we must confess their sins, inasmuch as our hand hath been in them. Again, the sins of others, when public, if not confessed and bemoaned by us, become ours. It is not enough for us that we do not join with, but we must mourn for, the abominations of others; but still principally our own sins must be our greatest trouble, and the matter of our confession.]

*Secondly*, Our sins to be our own. Many in confessing oftentimes transfer their sins upon others. These brats are so ugly, that when they are brought forth we are loath to own them, but lay them at others' doors. Eve chargeth her sin upon the serpent: Gen. iii. 12, 13, 'The serpent beguiled me;' Adam upon Eve, nay, in plain terms, upon God: 'The woman which thou gavest me.' St Austin, upon those words of David, *confitebor adversus me iniquitates meas domino*, 'I will confess my sins against myself unto the Lord,' observeth, that many confess their sins, not *against*, but *for themselves*; not *to*, but *against* the Lord. How usual is it with wicked men to accuse not only the devil, but God, for the sins which they commit, laying them upon fate and destiny, upon the stars and climate, upon their constitution and complexion, and the like! But the truth is, as Agamemnon said, *ὄττε Ζεῦς ὄττε μῆτρα ὄττε ἑβίνας*, neither Jupiter, nor the destinies, nor the furies, but it is a man's self that doth him the mischief; and therefore the true penitent layeth his sins at his own door, and taketh shame upon himself by reason of them.

*Thirdly*, Those sins which are most especially our own. The prophet Isaiah saith of himself and the people, Isa. liii. 6, 'We have all like sheep gone astray, and turned every man to his own way,' thereby intimating that, as all men go in a wrong way, so every man hath his own way in which he wandereth. It were easy to instance in countries, in persons, how there is some sin, which is, as it were, more especially beloved and practised by them. Pliny writeth of some families that had privy marks on their bodies peculiar to those of that line, and every man hath, as it were, a privy sin, which is most justly called his; but, if we will confess our sins aright, we must not leave out that sin; nay, our chiefest spite must be against it, according to David's resolve, Ps. xxxviii. 18, 'I will declare mine iniquity, and be sorry for my sin.' And so much shall suffice in answer to the first question, which respects the object of our confession.

*Quest. 2.* To whom confession of sins is to be made, is that which next in order calls for a solution. True it is, we have no express and direct, but yet we have a collateral and implicit, answer in the text; and though

it is not said, *If we confess our sins to God*, yet it will easily appear that it is so intended.

Indeed, it cannot be denied but that,

1. Our sins against the second table, as they are wrongs and injuries to our neighbour, ought to be confessed to him. In this sense St Augustine\* interprets that of St James, 'confess your faults one to another;' and without doubt, it is implicitly required by our blessed Saviour, when, Mat. v. 23, 24, he bids a man, before he offer his gift, to 'go and be reconciled to his brother, if he have aught against him;' to wit, by (at least) making an acknowledgment of the wrong he hath done him.

2. Our sins having been open, and so become scandalous, ought to be acknowledged to the church whereof we are members. This is that *ἐξομολόγησις*, which was used in the primitive times, of which Tertullian† and others of the ancients speak, a piece of discipline which it were heartily to be wished were still in use, that notorious offenders might be brought to a public acknowledgment of their sins.

3. Our sins, when they are not only in themselves gross, but to our consciences burdensome, may, nay, ought to be confessed to a faithful, pious, discreet minister. The truth is, there are many excellent benefits which hereby accrue to the penitent, as Zanchy hath well observed:‡ such as are the helping forward of his humiliation, faith, and repentance; the obtaining from the minister more suitable, particular, and direct counsels, more spiritual and fervent prayers both for and with him; and withal, upon the signs of his true contrition accompanying that confession, the comfortable sentence of absolution; and, therefore, though I do utterly dislike the doctrine of the Romish church, which asserts a particular enumeration of all our sins to the priest as necessary to remission; yea, in her last conventicle,§ rather than council, pronounceth an *anathema* to all who shall deny this particular sacramental confession to the priest to be of divine right; yea, though I abhor the practice of it as used among them by the priest, as a stratagem to untie the people's purses, and a picklock to open the secrets of states by the people, not as an hedge, but a gap to make way for future commissions with more freedom after they have (as they suppose) cleansed themselves by confession; yet I could heartily wish that the right use of private confession to the priest were revived and practised, since I am confident that as many having secret diseases perish for want of revealing them to an able physician, so many sin-sick souls either wholly miscarry, or however, sadly continue and increase their inward wounds, for want of making known their case to some faithful minister.

But the confession which our apostle here intends, is (no doubt) only in reference to God; for besides

\* Aug. in James v. 16.

† Tertull. de pœnit.

‡ Zanch. in loc.

§ Concil. Trident, Sess. 14, Can. 7.



that it is a confession to be made by the apostles, and so the ministers themselves as well as the people, it is clearly intimated, that this confession must be made to him who is just and faithful to forgive, and that is only God. Indeed, this confession is that which must accompany all the rest. When we confess the wrong to man, we must confess the sin to God, Ps. xxxii. 4; when we acknowledge the scandal to the church, still we must acknowledge the sin to God, Luke xv. 18; finally, when we confess to, our confession must not be terminated in, the minister; and though it be made before him, yet it must be directed to God. The truth is, those confessions without this are not available, but this may, nay, will be without those, if God deny the opportunity of them. Indeed, it is God who is either mediately or immediately injured, it is God's law which is directly violated in all sins, and therefore to him they must be confessed. Thus David said, 'I wil' confess my transgressions unto the Lord;' and the prodigal resolveth to 'go to his father and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee;' and St Chrysostom adviseth, yea, beseebeth the people\* to acknowledge their sins continually to God, to confess them before the judge, praying, if not with their tongue, yet their hearts.† And so much be spoken in answer to the second query.

How this confession must be performed is next to be resolved; to which end be pleased to take notice of the antecedent, ingredients, and consequent of a right acknowledgment.

1. There cannot be *agnitio* if there be not *cognitio peccati*, an acknowledging, unless there precede a knowledge of sin. David puts them together: Ps. li. 3, 'I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.' If our sins be not before us, how can we set them before God? And therefore, to the right exercise of this duty, there is required a previous examination of our hearts, inspection into our lives, that we may be enabled to see our sins. He that hath not yet asked himself that question, *Quid feci?* What have I done? can never make the confession, *Sic feci*, Thus and thus I have done; and in this respect I would, though not require, yet advise it as a pious and prudent practice, and that which I doubt not but many Christians have found benefit by, to keep a constant daily catalogue, as of mercies received, so of sins committed.

2. The ingredients of this confession are many, and such as well deserve our observation. A right confession of sin must be,

1. Free and voluntary, not a confession upon the rack or the gallows, extracted merely from sense of pain and smart of the punishment. We read of con-

\* Διὰ τοῦτο παρακαλῶ καὶ δέομαι καὶ ἀντιβολῶ, &c.—Chrysost. T. 6, hom. 5.

† Ἐπὶ τοῦ δικαστοῦ ὁμολογῆ τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἰσχυρομένους ἰς καὶ μὴ τῇ γλώττῃ ἀλλὰ τῇ μνήμῃ.—Chrysost. ad Hebr.

fessions made by Pharaoh, Exod. x. 16, and Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 24, but it was when judgment either feared or felt compelled them to it. Many cast out their sins by confession, as mariners do their wares in a storm, wishing for them again in a calm. A true confession must be ingenuous, and must come like water out of a spring, which floweth freely, not like water out of a still, which is forced by fire.

2. Cordial and sincere confession to men is a work of the voice, but to God of the heart, and that so peculiarly as oftentimes the heart alone is sufficient without the voice, but never the voice without the heart. Many men's confessions come from them as water runs through a pipe; they leave no impression, their hearts are not affected with what they confess. Oh let us learn to be in good earnest with God, remembering that as prayer for mercy, so confession of sin, must not be only a lip labour, since then, instead of offering the 'calves of our lips,' we shall but offer the 'lips of calves.'

3. Penitent and abasing. This is that which puts forth itself in a threefold affection, of shame, of grief, of hatred. We must confess,

(1.) With shame. This was Ezra's temper when he saith, chap. vi. 6, 'O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to heaven.' To be ashamed to confess is bad, but to confess with shame is good. Those words of the prophet, Hos. xiv. 2, 'So will we render the calves of our lips,' are by Velasquez\* expounded of penitent confession, which, whilst it brings by shame redness into the cheeks, as it were, lets out the blood of the sacrificed calf by the knife of repentance.

(2.) With grief. Thus the publican, Luke xviii. 13, for shame, 'stands afar off, not daring to lift his eyes to heaven,' and for grief 'smiteth his breast.' David doth not only say, Ps. xxxviii. 18, 'I will declare,' but 'I will be sorry for my sin.' The people of God, 1 Sam. vii. 6, in the day of their confession, not only say 'We have sinned,' but draw water and pour it out before the Lord, in token of contrition. We should, in confessing sins, have our hearts so affected, that our eyes with Job may 'pour tears before God,' Job xvi. 20; that, with David, 'rivers of tears may run down our eyes,' Ps. cxix. 136; yea, we should wish with Jeremiah, 'that our head were water, and our eyes a fountain of tears,' Jer ix. 1. But, however, *nonne stillabit oculus noster?* if we cannot pour out, shall we not drop a tear? or at least, if we cannot shed a tear, let us breathe forth a sigh for our sins. It is only the heart broken with godly sorrow that sends forth a true confession.

(3.) With hatred. Confession is the soul's vomit; and look as what the stomach vomits it loathes, yea, therefore, it casts it up because it loathes it, so must we confess our sins with an holy indignation against, and detestation of, them. There are, beloved, too-

\* Velasqu. in Phil. cap. ii. v. 10, Annot. 2.

many who declare their sin, but it is, to use the prophet Isaiah's comparison, 'as Sodom,' Isaiah iii. 9, with impudency; they make a sport of acting, and they make a jest of confessing their sins. These are they who, according to St Paul's expression, 'glory in their shame,' Phil. iii. 19; mention their sin, not with sorrow, but joy; hatred, but delight; boasting of the wickedness they act. It is a confession which is attended with dolent impenitency, but the penitent confession is of a contrary nature, ever accompanied with a shameful grief and loathing.

4. Believing and fiducial. It must be like the confession, not of the malefactor to the judge, but of a sick man to the physician. We read of Cain and Judas confessing, but it was rather a desperate accusation than a penitent confession; Daniel, as he acknowledged, to them belonged confusion, Dan. ix. 5, so that to God belongeth mercy. Thus must our most sorrowful acknowledgment be joined with some comfortable hope of, and trust in, divine mercy.

3. The consequent of this confession must be dereliction. Were it only to confess our fault when we have done it, it were an easy matter; but if Solomon may be St John's expositor, it is not only to confess but forsake sin, Prov. xxviii. 13; and therefore interpreters truly assert, that confession is here put synecdochically\* for the whole works of repentance, it being not enough for us to confess the sin we have committed, but we must not commit again wilfully the sins we confess. Indeed, it is very sad to consider how generally defective men's confessions are as to this particular. Many (as Fulgentius excellently) being pricked in conscience, confess that they have done ill, and yet put no end to their ill deeds; they humbly accuse themselves in God's sight of the sins which oppress them, and yet with a perverse heart rebelliously heap up those sins whereof they accuse themselves. The very pardon which they beg with mournful sighs, they impede with their wicked actions; they ask help of the physician, and still minister matter to the disease, thus in vain endeavouring to appease him with penitent words, whom they go on to provoke by an impenitent course.† Look how Saul dealt with David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, xxvi. 1, one while confessing his injustice towards him, and soon after persecuting him in the wilderness; so do men with God. You know the story of Pharaoh, who one day saith, 'I have sinned,' and promiseth to let Israel go, and the next day 'hardeneth his heart, and refuseth to let them go;' and this practice is too, too frequent. Our repentance is a kind of checker work, black and white, white and black; we sin and then we confess, we confess and then again we sin. But oh, beloved, what will it avail you to vomit up your sins by confession, if you do it only with the drunkard, to make

way for pouring in more drink, committing new sins! nay, with the dog, you return to your vomit and lick it up again. It is excellent counsel that is given by St Ambrose,\* Oh take we heed that the devil have not cause to triumph over our remedy as well as our disease, and that our repentance be not such as needs a repentance. Indeed (as Fulgentius† appositely), then is confession of sin available, when it is accompanied with a separation from sin, and the practice of the contrary duty; and therefore, what our apostle saith of loving, 1 John iii. 18, let me say of confessing, Confess 'not in tongue or in word only, but in deed and in truth;' by endeavouring to forsake those sins which we confess, not only saying 'I have done iniquity,' but cordially adding, 'I will do so no more,' Job xxxiv. 32. I end this with that note of St Austin upon those words of the prophet, Isa. i. 16, 'Wash you, make you clean:' He only washeth and is clean, who sorrowfully acknowledgeth the past, and doth not again willingly admit future sins.‡ And so much shall serve in despatch of the third question.

4. Come we now in a few words to the last, which is, who they are that must thus confess; and that is intimated in the word *we*. To confess sin, is that which belongs not only to wicked and ungodly men, but to St John and such as he was, good, nay, the best of Christians; and that in a respect of their,

(1.) Past enormities. True penitents love still to rub upon their old sores. David in his psalm depreceth the 'sins of his youth,' Ps. xxv. 7. Our old sins call for new confessions, and this holy men do upon several considerations.

[1.] To keep down the swelling of spiritual pride, which is apt to arise in the best saints. King Agathocles, by drinking in earthen vessels, to mind himself of his original (which was from a potter), kept himself humble; so do good Christians, by remembering and acknowledging their heinous sins before conversion.

[2.] To gain further assurance of the pardon of these sins. Faith in the best is apt to faint, and fears to arise in their minds, but the renewing of confession and contrition supports faith and expels fear.

[3.] To strengthen themselves the more against relapses into those sins. The best men want not temptations to the worst sins, especially those which before conversion they were accustomed to and lived in, but every new confession is as it were a new obligation upon a man not to do it any more.

[4.] To inflame their souls with greater measure of love to God and Christ. The sense of sin is a great endearment of mercy, and the confession of sin reneweth the sense of it. Indeed, we must not commit sin abundantly, that grace may abound the more, but we may and ought to confess sin abundantly, that grace may abound, and be the more precious to us. For

\* Peccatorum confessio synecdochicè universam penitentiam hoc loco significat.—*Vorst. in loc.*

† Fulgent. de rem. peccat. l. i. c. 12.

\* Ambros. de penitent. l. i. c. 7. et c. 11. Aug. hom. 41.

† Fulgent. de Remiss. peccat. l. ii. c. 16.

‡ Aug. Serm. 66. de Temp. hom. 41.



these reasons it is that good Christians are frequent in confessing their old sins; but besides, they have new matter of confession in respect of,

(2.) Their present infirmities. Not only all that are wicked, but all that are sinners, are bound to confess their sins, and (as you formerly heard) the best whilst they continue here are sinners. Whilst the ship is leaking, the water must be pumped out. As the room continually gathereth soil, so it must be daily swept, and the stomach which is still breeding ill humours, must have vomits administered. The line of confession must be drawn out as long as the line of sinning, and that is as long as the line of living.

To shut up, therefore; we may by this see what kind of saints those are, who are altogether for high raptures of gratulation and admiration, but think themselves past confession and humiliation; and therefore you shall observe their prayers to have little or no mixture of acknowledgment of sin. To all such, I shall say as the emperor did to the arch-puritan Aesius, *κλίμακα θεῶν καὶ μόνος εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνάβηθι*, erect thy ladder, and climb alone upon it to heaven. For our parts (my brethren), let confession of sins be, as the first, so the last round in that ladder to heaven, by which we expect and endeavour to ascend that celestial habitation.

## SERMON XVII.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—*  
1 JOHN I. 9.

THAT covenant which almighty God hath made with fallen man in Christ Jesus, is not unfitly called by divines a covenant of grace, free grace being the impulsive cause from within moving God to make that covenant. But though it be *of grace*, yet it is still *a covenant*; and therefore, as in all covenants there is a mutual obligation on both parties between whom the covenant is made, so is it in this, wherein is signified, as what God will do *for us*, so what he will have done *by us*. Hence it is that we find not only in the law but gospel commands as well as comforts, precepts as promises; yea, these promises still proposed conditionally; for so we may observe, among other places in this chapter, and particularly in this verse, wherein remission is annexed to confession, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful,' &c.

Having already despatched the duty in an absolute consideration, as it is the matter of a precept, we are now to handle the relative, as it is the condition of a promise, the prosecution of which shall be done two ways.

1. Negatively, it is not a cause, but only a condition of the promise, and therefore it is not said *ὅτι* but *καὶ ὡς*, because, but *ἰf*, we confess our sins. Indeed, if confession be a cause of remission, it must be either meritorious or instrumental, but it is not, it cannot be, either of these.

(1.) Confession is not, cannot be, a meritorious cause of forgiveness. It is satisfaction, not confession, which merits remission; and therefore with men forgiveness upon mere acknowledgment is an act, not of equity, but of charity. In this regard the merit of remission is Christ's, not ours; his blood, whereby he hath made satisfaction, not our tears, which are only the concomitant of confession. True it is, there is a congruity in confession, inasmuch as it maketh us *fit for*, but there is no condignity to render us *deserving of*, this mercy of forgiveness.

It may perhaps be here inquired why, since the commission of sin is meritorious of punishment, the confession is not of pardon; for, if the sin be therefore of so great a desert, because against God, why shall not the acknowledgment be of as great merit, because to God? The answer to which is justly returned, partly that whereas our commissions are purely sinful, our confessions are not purely penitent, since even when we confess our sins we sin in confessing; partly that whereas the demerit of the fault is chiefly *respectu obiecti*, in regard of the person to whom the injury is done, the amends for the fault is *respectu subjecti*, principally considerable in respect of the person by whom it is made. And hence it is that, though the sin committed by us be of infinite demerit, because against an infinite justice, yet nothing done by us can be of infinite merit, because we are finite persons.

(2.) Confession is not the instrumental cause of forgiveness. To clear this the more, be pleased to know that there is a great deal of difference between that which is merely conditional, and that which is so a condition, as it is withal an instrument. That may be a necessary condition, which is only required to the qualification of the subject on whom the thing is conferred; but that which is not only a condition, but an instrument, hath some kind of influence into the production of the thing which is conferred; and this being well observed will serve excellently to clear that orthodox doctrine of justification by faith alone. We are justified (a chief ingredient whereof is forgiveness of sins) only by faith, not by repentance, not by charity, nor by any other grace or work, because it is only faith which concurreth as an instrument to this work, inasmuch as it is the hyssop sprinkling the soul with the blood, the hand applying to the soul the righteousness of Christ, for which we are forgiven and justified. And hence it is that the preposition *διὰ* is only used concerning faith, 'He is the propitiation for

our sins through faith,' Rom. iii. 25, and 'we are justified by faith,' Gal. ii. 16; whereas it is never said we are justified by confessing, or forgiving, or repenting, though yet still these are conditions of justification and forgiveness, inasmuch as they are necessary qualifications required in the person whom God doth justify, and to whom sin is forgiven.

2. Affirmatively it is a condition, and that both exclusive and inclusive.

(1.) It is an exclusive condition. This *εαν* is as much as *ει μη*, this *si* as *nisi*, if otherwise not. There is no forgiveness to be had without confession; though it be not that *for which*, no, nor yet *by which*, yet it is that *without which* no remission can be obtained. I think it is needless to dispute what God could do by his absolute power; it is enough he cannot do it by his actual, because he will not; and truly, though there is no need of any, yet there is abundant reason of this divine pleasure, since it is that which his justice, his purity, and his wisdom seem to call for. Justice requireth satisfaction, much more confession. If God shall pardon them which do not confess but conceal, and go on in sin, it would open a gap to all profaneness and impiety, which cannot consist with his purity. Finally, it cannot stand with God's wisdom to bestow mercy but on them that are in some measure fitted for it; and we are not, cannot be, fitted for remission till we have practised confession. None are fit for mercy but they who see their need of it, hunger after it, and know how to value it; whereas if God should offer pardon to an impenitent, he would scarce accept it; however, he would not prize it. It is confession which maketh us taste the bitterness of sin, and so prepareth us for a relief of the sweetness of forgiving mercy.

The exclusiveness of this condition is that which Solomon expresseth, when he opposeth hiding to confessing; and as he assureth mercy to the one, so he flatly denieth it to the other: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that hideth his sin shall not prosper.' And to this purpose it is that almighty God threateneth, Hos. v. 15, 'I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face;' in which *donec* is manifestly intimated a *nisi*, *until*, that is, *unless they acknowledge*, I will not vouchsafe my gracious presence to them. Yea, this is that which David found verified in his own experience, Ps. xxxii. 3-5, where he saith, 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old; day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; I acknowledged my sin, and thou forgavest.' Unless the sore be opened\* and the corrupt matter let out, the party cannot be healed; when the ague breaketh forth at the lips, then there is hope of its cessation.† If the apostume break, and come not

\* Quid peccatorum confessio, nisi quædam vulneris ruptio?—*Greg. Mag.*

† Febris cum foris erumpit spem affert desinendi.—*Am-bros. in Ps. xxxvii.*

forth at the ears or mouth, the patient is but a dead man.\* Till that which oppresses the stomach be cast up, there can be no ease;† and unless there be a penitent laying open of our sins before God by self-accusation, it is in vain to expect his absolution. Those words of the wise man, Prov. xviii. 21, 'Life and death are in the power of the tongue,' are not unfitly moralised by one to this purpose: If our tongues keep silence, nothing but death to be expected; if they speak in humble acknowledgment, life is assured. This is the course of the court of heaven, directly contrary to the courts on earth, as St Chrysostom and others‡ have observed. With men, confession is the ready way to condemnation; with God, there is no other way to remission. He that doth not conceal his offence from the judge is sure to suffer; he that doth endeavour to hide his sin from God shall surely suffer. So the sentence was against the speechless offender, Mat. xxii. 12, 'Take him, bind him hand and foot, cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

(2.) It is an inclusive condition, such as wherever it is found the benefit is certainly conferred. This supposition may truly be turned into a position, this *εαν* into an *αληθως*, verily God will forgive them who confess their sins. It is not an *it may be* God will forgive, or an *who knoweth but*, he will forgive, but a *surely* he will forgive. There is not only a possibility or probability, but a certainty of remission to confessing sinners. St Bernard§ to this purpose taketh notice of a book which God keepeth as it were in heaven, and saith appositely, *Quod ibi scribit transgressio, delet confessio*, what sin writeth in, confession blotteth out of, that book. Hence it is that we find God himself prescribing this, Num. v. 6, 7, as the ready way to forgiveness, his ministers assuring pardon, Jer. iii. 12, 13, upon the performance of this; so Nathan did David, 2 Sam. xii. 13, yea, sinners, actually obtaining pardon upon this. So did David and the prodigal; and which is observable, in both those penitents God's remission seemed, as it were, to prevent their confession, and interpose itself between the purpose and the performance of it. David only said, Ps. xxxii. 5, he would confess, and God forgave; and the prodigal said, Luke xv. 18, 'I will arise and go,' and 'whilst yet he was a great way off, the Father runs to meet him.¶

\* Quando apostema convertitur ad interiora, causa mortis; ad exteriora, possibile ad salutem pervenire.—*Summ. Conc. on. Nisi quis animi sui vitia cognoverit et oris proprii confessione prodiderit, purgari absolviq; non poterit.—Orig. πεισιν αεχων*, l. iii. c. i.

† Stomachus, si vomuerit, relevatur, &c.—*Orig. in Ps. xxxvii.*

‡ Tertull. de pœnit. c. viii. Vide Velasqu. in Phi. Chrysost. de verb. Isaia. hom. iii.; Ut qui propria vobis non tacuerit flagitia damnatur, ita nobiscum qui eadem Deo fuerit confessus absolvitur.—*Sidon. Apoll. l. iv. ep. xiv.*

§ Bern. de Inter, dom. c. xxxvii.

¶ Velox confessio, velocior medicina.—*Eucher.*



And now, if any shall say, We have set upon this course, but not yet found this comfort; we have confessed our sins, and they are not (at least in our apprehension) forgiven; I answer, Perhaps thou hast not been serious and ingenuous in thy confession; thou hast confessed some sins, but not all; or thy confessions have not been so cordial and penitent as they ought to be; and no wonder if, failing in the right performance of the condition, thou dost not find the accomplishment of the promise. But if thy endeavours have been sincere in confessing, thou must then distinguish between the real condonation and the sensible manifestation. Thy sins may be forgiven in heaven, and yet not in thy conscience. As God many times heareth prayer, and yet the petitioner finds no answer, so he pardoneth sin to the penitent, and yet he doth not know of it; and therefore still it remaineth as a truth, remission is undoubtedly annexed to confession. *Tantum valent tres syllaba* PEC-CA-VI, saith St Austin,\* of so great force are those three syllables in the Latin, three words in the English, when uttered with a contrite heart, *I have sinned*, to obtain forgiveness of our sins.

To end this, therefore, and to dismiss the first general of the text.

What an engagement and encouragement should this be to the practice of this duty!

1. The necessity should engage us. Might pardon be had upon any other terms, this might be dispensed with, but it cannot be; there is not only *necessitas precepti*, a necessity by virtue of a command (though truly God's bare command is a sufficient obligation, and therefore Tertullian accounts it boldness to dispute of the good of repentance,† whenas we have a precept enjoining it), but there is *necessitas medii*, a necessity in reference to the end of forgiveness and happiness, there being no other means or way wherein it is to be obtained, since by concealing of, and indulging to, our sins, we exclude God's indulgence.

2. The utility should encourage us. Were it only God's honour, which is hereby advanced, it should be a prevailing motive. Confession of sin, though it publish the ill qualities of the peccant, yet it hath this good quality, that it ascribeth to God his divine attributes: omniscience, acknowledging it were in vain to hide from him that seeth already; mercy, since it were madness to make confession where we conceived no compassion; justice, which we acknowledge might utterly consume us; patience, which is the only cause that vengeance did not presently follow our sins; finally, power, that there is no way to fly from him, but to go to him in humble confessions. To this purpose St Austin tells us,‡ *Est confessio laudantis et gementis*, there is the confession of the thankful and of the sorrowful; nay, the confession of sin is a confession of praise; yea, *bis Deum laudamus ubi pie nos*

*accusamus*, by taking shame to ourselves, we give double glory to God. But if zeal for God's glory will not induce us, yet love to ourselves should oblige us, since, as it is God's honour, so it is our comfort. He hath the glory, we have the good; his is the praise, ours is the profit, we being truly entitled to and qualified for the blessing of remission. For this reason no doubt it is that the devil striveth what he can, of all duties, to hinder us from this of confession. *Lupus apprehendit guttur ovis*,\* the wolf catcheth at the throat of the sheep; that is the devil's aim, to stop our confessions, because he knoweth how advantageous the performance of it will be unto us. Indeed, therefore, he would not have us to accuse ourselves, that he might accuse us; but according to St Ambrose† his counsel, *præveni accusatorem tuum*, let us be wise to prevent him, and the more he dissuades us from, let us with the greater fervency set upon, this duty, which, as it is acceptable to God, because it exalts his glory, so it is profitable to us in obtaining our pardon.

Nor let us only be engaged and encouraged to the duty itself, but to the right manner of performance. It is that upon which, as it were, our everlasting comfort depends, and therefore how careful should we be so to manage it as we may not miss of our comfort. Wouldst thou, then, that God should *ignoscere*, cover? Do thou *agnoscere*, discover, thy sins. Wouldst thou have no sin unpardoned? Let no sin be unconfessed. If thou wouldst not have God impute thy sins to thee, do thou charge them upon thyself. Wouldst thou have God to spare thee? Do not spare thy sins. Wouldst thou speed well in the court of heaven? Tell the worst tale thou canst against thyself. Wouldst thou have him freely to forgive? Do thou freely acknowledge. Wouldst thou rejoice and glory in his pardoning love? Confess thy sins with sorrow, grief, and hatred. Wouldst thou have him put away thine iniquities far from him? Do thou put thy iniquities far from thee. Finally, wouldst thou have him to cast thy sins for ever behind his back? Do thou often set them before thine own and his face, ever remembering that, if we condemn ourselves, he is ready to acquit us; if we lay our sins upon ourselves, he is willing to lay them upon Christ; if we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive. And so I am fallen upon the

mercy annexed to the duty, set down in these words, 'To forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

In the discussion whereof, I shall take notice of three particulars, each of which are doubly expressed: The object, called by those two names, *sin*, *unrighteousness*.

The act, characterised in those two metaphors, *for-give* and *cleanse*.

The extent of the act, in reference to the object, intimated in the plural number, sins, and expressed in the universal particle, *all* unrighteousness.

\* Aug. hom. xli.

† Tertull. de penitent.

‡ Aug. in Ps. xci.

\* Summ. Concionat.

† Ambrose in Ps. xxxv.

1. The object of remission is here described by two names, and both of them very significant.

(1.) The first is *ἀμαρτία*, the most usual word by which sin in general is called. It answereth to *חטא* in the Hebrew, and *peccatum* in the Latin, and cometh no doubt from the verb *ἀμαρτάνειν*, which is as much as *ἀσκοπα τοξέειν*, to shoot besides the mark; whence Suidas\* defineth it to be *τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἀποτυγχάνειν*, and deriveth it from *α στερεητικόν*, and *μάρπτειν*, as if it were *ἀμαρπτια*. It is very observable to this purpose what we read in the book of Judges, chap. vii. 20, concerning these seven hundred chosen men of Benjamin, who could sling stones at an hair's breadth, and not miss; where the Hebrew word for *miss* is *חטא*, the Greek, *διαμαρτάνω*, whereby is intimated to us what the nature of sin is, namely, a missing the mark. God, beloved, hath proposed to man a mark, to wit, glory and felicity, which by sin we fail of, according to that expression of the apostle, Rom. xvii. 23, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' where the Greek word *ὑστερέω* alludeth to those who come short in running to the goal. Both amount to the same; and let us see how sin maketh us come short of the goal, and shoot beside the mark of bliss. And no wonder, since, according to our apostle's definition, *ἀμαρτία* is *ἀνομία*, 'sin is a transgression of the law;' to which agreeth Cicero's† definition of *peccatum*, that it is *transilire lineas*. As God hath given man a scope to aim at, so a rule to walk by; as he hath proposed an end, so he hath appointed a way; but sin misseth of both. Hence it is that sinners are said to go astray, as sheep which wander from the fold; and sin is compared to darkness, which causeth the traveller to step aside. So fitly is it here called *ἀμαρτία*, a deviating aberration from the right rule or scope.

2. The second is *ἀδικία*, a word which is sometimes used, in a strict notion, for one kind of sin, to wit, injustice towards man.‡ In this sense it is contradistinguished to ungodliness by St Paul, Rom. i. 18, where he saith, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men.'

But, again, sometimes it is taken in a larger notion, as applicable to every sin; for as the moralist distinguisheth of righteousness, it is particular and universal, which universal righteousness containeth in it all virtues.§ So we may distinguish of unrighteousness, and so in a general sense it comprehendeth all sins. Thus it is said of the Romans, before conversion, they did 'yield their members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin,' Rom. vi. 13. According to this latitude it is to be taken in the promise, Heb. viii. 12, where God saith, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness;' and here in the text, which assureth

cleansing from all unrighteousness; and therefore, though we may with Demosthenes distinguish between these two, by the one understanding a voluntary, the other an involuntary, fault;\* or with Turrianus, upon the text,† by sin understand lesser, and by unrighteousness greater, crimes; yet I rather conceive both of equal extent. Nor is it without just reason, that all sin is called by the name of injustice, whether you consider it in its nature or its effects.

(1.) Look upon the nature of sin. It is *ἀμαρτία*, and therefore *ἀδικία*, a missing the mark; and he that doth so, shooteth wrong; a swerving from the right rule, and therefore must be crooked. It is one of the definitions we meet with in St Austin of sin, it is a will of getting or keeping what justice forbids.‡ 'The statutes of the Lord are right,' saith David, Ps. xix. 8. 'The commandment is just,' saith St Paul, Rom. vii. 12; and therefore sin, which is a breach of it, must needs be unrighteousness.

(2.) Behold the effects of sin, what injury it doth both to God and to the sinner.

[1.] Sin is unrighteousness towards God, denying him his due, and robbing him of his honour. True it is, God's internal essential glory is inviolable, but sin depriveth him of that external glory and honour which the creature by worship and service ought to give to him; and though it cannot actually, yet it doth intentionally, and therefore interpretatively, injure the divine Majesty; in which respect God complaineth, Amos ii. 16, that he is 'pressed under sin as a cart under sheaves'; and it is truly said, *omne peccatum est quasi deicidium*, sin doth as much as in it lieth commit murder upon the sacred Deity.

[2.] Sin is unrighteousness towards ourselves: 'He that sinneth against me,' saith Wisdom, Prov. viii. 36, 'wrongeth his own soul;' and that is the greatest wrong a man can do himself, it being such a loss as no gain can countervail; for 'what will it profit a man,' saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. xvi. 26, 'to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' It is not unfitly observed that *ἄτη* in the Greek, which signifieth *loss*, cometh from *חטא* in the Hebrew, which signifieth sin, sin ever bringing loss, and doing the greatest injury to him that committeth it.

And now, beloved, what other use should we make of these considerations, but that we learn so to look upon sin as the Scripture represents it, that we may loathe and abhor it. Alas, whatsoever pleasure thou mayest have in it, it is but the 'pleasure of sin;' whatever mammon thou mayest get by it, it is but the 'mammon of unrighteousness;' and, therefore, when the seeming delight and profit may allure thee, let the real obliquity and iniquity of it affright thee. A morally just person would not wrong a man of a penny

\* Suid. in litt. A. † Cic. paradox. c. iii.

‡ Vide Fulgent. de Remiss. peccat. l. i. c. 12.

§ *Ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνη συλλήβδην πᾶς ἀρετὴ ἵσται.*—Theog.

\* *ἀδικίᾳ τίς ἕκων, ἰζήματα τίς ἕκων.*—Demost. περὶ στεφαν.

† Turrian. in loc.

‡ *Peccatum est voluntas assequendi vel retinendi quod justitia vetat.*—Aug. de Durb. anim. adv. Man.



to get a pound, and why wilt thou wrong both God and thyself for a little present emolument and contentment? Let not, then, sin any longer deceive thee, but remember what names are given it in God's dictionary; and in those names read its nature, that thou mayest hate to commit that which is so irregular and unjust, being therefore characterised by these two titles of *ἀμαρτία* and *ἀδικία*, sin and unrighteousness.

2. The act of remission, wherein the benefit consists, is expressed in two metaphors, *forgiving* and *cleansing*, and cometh next to be considered.

Indeed, some expositors refer these two phrases to two several acts, and so conceive this promise to consist of two parts, to wit, justification and sanctification. Thus Beza\* calleth cleansing another benefit, distinct from that of forgiving. And truly it is not to be denied, but that,

1. Justification and sanctification are inseparable concomitants. Indeed, they are not to be confounded, but withal they ought not to be severed. Distinguished they must be, divided they cannot; and, therefore, they are fitly called twins in the womb of free grace. To this purpose saith St Bernard,† where sin is pardoned, the gift of sanctity is conferred; and in this respect St Austin saith, that remission of sin maketh men good trees.‡ Hence it is that we find those two frequently joined together by St Paul, 'you are justified, you are sanctified,' 1 Cor. vi. 11; by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxvi. 26, 'I will cleanse you from all your iniquities, and I will give you a new heart;' and by the prophet Micah, chap. vii. 19, 'I will subdue thine iniquities, and cast them into the depth of the sea.'

2. This phrase of *cleansing* serveth very fitly to represent the work of sanctification, whereby the filth of sin is more and more removed; and therefore many times it is set forth in Scripture by this metaphor. So when David prayeth for a clean heart, Ps. li. 10, and St Paul exhorts to cleanse ourselves, 2 Cor. vii. 1, we are no doubt to construe it of sanctification.

Upon these considerations, I shall not quarrel with any who so interpret it here; but I conceive it more rational in this place to refer both to one, and by *cleansing*, understand the same with *forgiving*, and that because,

1. It is very probable that St John attributes the same thing here to God, as the principal efficient, which he ascribeth at the seventh verse to Christ, as the meritorious cause. Now the *cleansing* there spoken of, as hath been already manifested, and evidently appeareth, is that of justification.

2. It is very incongruous to make the same thing both the condition and the matter of a promise. Indeed, that which is the condition of one promise may be the matter of another, but the same thing cannot be the matter and condition of the same promise.

\* Bez. in loc. † Bern. in Cant. serm. 37.

‡ Aug. de verb. dom. serm. 12.

Now the *cleansing* from sin, which is an act of sanctification, consists, though not only, yet partly, in the confession of sins, which is the condition of the promise.

Upon these considerations I shall handle both these metaphors, as belonging to one and the same benefit. Nor is it unusual with the Holy Ghost in Scripture to repeat the same things under various notions; yea, so choice is the matter here promised, that it cannot be sufficiently expressed and assured to us. No wonder that it is ingeminated, to forgive, to cleanse.

And indeed, so emphatical are both these phrases, that though they are one and the same in sense, yet I shall handle them severally as they lie in order.

1. The first word we meet with is *forgive*, a word that is of all others most frequently used. If you inquire into the plain meaning of the Greek word, *ἀφίημι*, it is as much as to *dismiss*, or *send away*, or *let alone*. Thus, when God forgiveth sin, he lets the sinner alone, and, as it were, dismisseth his sin, removing it (according to the psalmist's expression, Ps. ciii. 12) 'as far from him as east from the west.' If you observe the use of the word, you shall find it applied three several ways: to the acquitting of one that is accused, the releasing of one that is imprisoned, and the discharging of one that is indebted; each of which (especially the last) serve to set forth this benefit.

When Agesilaus wrote to the judge in the behalf of Nicias, he used this phrase, If he have done no wrong, *ἀφεε*, acquit him; if he have done wrong, *ἐμοὶ ἀφεε*, acquit him for my sake; *παντὸς δ' ἀφεε*, however, acquit him.\* This is that which God doth in forgiving, acquit the sinner from the accusations that are laid against him by sin and Satan. Our blessed Saviour, Luke iv. 18, quoting that place of the prophet, maketh use of the noun of this verb, 'to preach, *ἀφεσίν*, deliverance to the captives'; as if *ἀφίημι* were as much as *ἀνίημι*; and thus doth the pitifulness of divine mercy in forgiving loose the captive sinners, who are tied and bound with the chains and fetters of their sins. In the parable of the lord and his servant who owed him many talents, this word is used to express the lord's forgiving the debt to his servant, Mat. xiii. 27; and this is the sense in which the Scripture most frequently useth the expression. And therefore in the Lord's prayer, where forgiveness is expressed by this word, one of the evangelists, Mat. vi. 12, expressly joins with it *ὀφειλήματα*, *debts*, 'forgive us our debts.'

And now, according to this notion of the word, there are two things: it represents to us what sin doth, and what forgiveness doth.

1. What sin doth. It maketh a man a debtor. *Grave vocabulum debitoris*, saith St Ambrose.† the name of debtor is very displeasing; yet such is every sinner, a debtor to God's justice by reason of the

\* Plut. mor.

† Ambr. de Tob. cap. 7.

breach of his law. Indeed man, as a creature, was a debtor to God's authority commanding, but withal he was able to pay that debt to the full, and therefore it was no burden nor misery; whereas man, as a sinner, is a debtor to God's justice punishing, and this such a debt as he is never able to satisfy, and therefore must lie in prison for ever. It is a proverb in Suidas,\* ἀπαξ πυρρός και δίκαιος γλωρός, once red with blushing at the time of borrowing, and ten times pale for fear of paying. Augustus would fain buy his pillow who was so much in debt, as conceiving it was good to sleep on. How can a sinner sleep securely who is indebted so deeply!

2. But that which is here chiefly considerable, is what forgiveness doth. Indeed, it lets us see that wherein the nature of this blessing consists. Whereas sin, making us debtors to divine justice, obligeth us to the suffering of eternal punishment, forgiveness taketh off this obligation, and consequently the punishment itself; so that, look as a forgiven debtor is freed from whatsoever penalty his debt did render him liable to, yea, from being so much as liable to the penalty, so is the forgiven sinner from the punishment itself, which is the remote term, and the obligation to it, which is the proxime term of pardon. In this respect it is that Anselm saith,† to forgive sin is not to punish it; and St Austin to the same purpose,‡ it is God's not marking iniquity so as to inflict the penalty due to it; and the schools,§ to remit the sin is not to impute it so as to punish it.

For the fuller opening this truth, know,

1. On the one hand, there is a great deal of difference between these two, to withhold the execution of, and to withdraw the obligation to, the punishment. It is one thing for a creditor to give day of payment, and another thing to cancel the bond. Indeed, the phrase used by Moses, of God's forgiving his people 'from Egypt until now,' Num. xiv. 19, seemeth chiefly to intend his sparing to punish them. But that is forgiveness in a larger and improper sense; according to the genuine notion, there is a vast difference between forgiving and forbearing mercy. As learned Davenant upon those words, Col. iii. 13, 'forbearing and forgiving one another,' hath observed, that there is far more in the latter than in the former, since a man may forbear revenge merely for want of ability or opportunity. So is it true (though not upon the same ground) in respect of God, his forgiving is far more than his forbearing; and therefore this latter he vouchsafeth even to those who go on in sin, but the former only to them who confess their sin; since, whereas by the one it is only he doth not as yet, by the other it is that he will not at all punish.

2. On the other hand, there is a great deal of dif-

ference betwixt afflicting for sin and punishing for sin, properly so called. For though the meritorious cause of both be the same, to wit, sin, yet the impulsive cause from within is different: that, from an anger mixed with love; this, from mere anger, and purely judicial wrath. Besides, the final cause is far different: that is for emendation of the person, this is for satisfaction of the law; and so, whereas that is medicinal, this is exitial.\*

That God doth afflict his own people for sin, yea, for sin after it is forgiven, is a case so clear that it cannot upon any just reason be denied. The antinomians do but discover their own blindness, whilst they deny that God seeth sin so as to correct it in justified persons. That instance of David is pregnant, whom the prophet tells, 2 Sam. xii., as it were with one breath, that God had forgiven his sin, and yet for that sin the child must die; that of the psalmist concerning the Israelites, Ps. xcix. 12, is very plain, 'Thou wast a God that forgavest their sin, though thou tookest vengeance of their iniquities;' finally, that of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi., is no less apposite, who, though they were forgiven, and therefore should not be condemned with the world, yet were judged and chastised of the Lord for their sin of unworthy receiving the holy sacrament.

But still, though God do afflict, yet he doth not punish for sin those whom he forgiveth, unless as all afflictions may in some sort be called punishments. And the reason is plain, because punishing for sin is in a way of revenge and satisfaction, which are directly opposite to forgiveness; and we may as well say that a judge can at the same time pardon a malefactor and execute him, as that God can punish when he forgiveth. Indeed, because those eternal miseries have most properly in them *rationem pœnæ*, the nature of satisfactory punishment, therefore forgiveness chiefly consists in taking off the obligation to that; according to St Paul's phrase, Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' But yet it is no less true, that the obligation to temporal as well as eternal punishment is taken off; so that, though the same outward miseries seize upon pardoned as well as unpardoned sinners, yet not in the same way, as hath been already intimated. And therefore, though God do inflict many miseries of life, yea, death itself, upon forgiven sinners, to make them feel the smart of sin, watchful how they run into sin, and to declare his justice against sin, yet not in the least to satisfy his justice upon them for sin, that being already most fully (as I shall hereafter shew) performed by Christ.

2. You see the significancy of the first word, and thereby the nature of the thing; pass we on to the

\* Suid in litt. A.

† *Dimittere peccatum non est aliud quam [non] punire.*—*Ans. cur Deus homo*, lib. i. cap. 12.

‡ Aug. in Ps. xxxii.

§ Durand. in Sententis.

\* In filios damnationis vindicat iratus, in filios gratiæ vindicat propitius.—*Aug. de peccat. mer. et remis.*, lib. i. cap. 36.



second, which, though the same, as to the thing, with the former, yet wants not its peculiar emphasis.

That distinction of divines concerning *remissio culpæ et pœnæ*, the remission of the fault and the punishment, may not unfitly be made use of for a distinct reference of those two expressions. The former, of *forgiving*, more properly refers to the remission of the *punishment*, though yet it includeth the *fault*; as a creditor cancelling the bond doth thereby remit the debt itself. This latter, of *cleansing*, chiefly refers to the remission of the *fault*, which defileth, though it include the *punishment*, because it is of that defilement which is contracted through the guilt of sin.

And now, as in the former, so in this expression, we have two things considerable, what unrighteousness doth, and what pardon doth.

1. What unrighteousness doth. It maketh the sinner filthy and polluted in God's sight. Sins, as they are *debita*, debts, so they are said to be *remitted* and blotted out; and as they are *sordes*, filthy, so they are said elsewhere to be covered, and here to be cleansed. Oh, then, how odious is an unpardoned sinner in God's sight! It is very observable how almighty God, describing the sinful state of rebellious Israel, Ezek. xvi., borroweth a metaphor from a child that is not swaddled, but lieth 'polluted in its blood;' and the psalmist, Ps. xiv. 1, speaking of wicked men, saith, 'They are corrupt, and become abominable,' where the former word is borrowed from a dead carcase. And truly a child in its blood is not more loathsome to our eyes, a carcase on the dunghill is not more noisome to our smell, than a sinful wretch is in God's eyes and to his nostrils.

2. What forgiveness doth. It cleaueth the sinner. An expression that must not be strained too much, as if (according to the doctrine of the church of Rome) the pardoning of sin were an utter extinction and abolition of it, as cleansing doth wholly take away filth. True it is, where sin is forgiven, the filth of sin is in some measure, and shall at last be wholly, removed; but that is only the effect of glorification, not of justification or sanctification. And, indeed, as if our apostle would prevent any such inference from this phrase, we find him subjoining, 'If we say we have not sinned,' as before, when he speaketh of Christ's cleansing, he addeth, 'If we say we have no sin;' so that sin is therefore said to be cleansed, not that the filth of it doth not remain, but that it shall not be imputed to us.

If, then, you would have the intention of the Holy Ghost in this phrase, when applied to forgiveness, take it thus: Look as a man, when he is cleansed from filth, is as if he had been never defiled, so a sinner, when pardoned, is, in God's account, as if he had never been a sinner. Not but that God seeth him to be a sinner still, because the spot of corruption remaineth in him, but that God will not deal with him as a sinner, nor impute it to him for condemnation.

In this, and no other sense, are those expressions to be construed, when God saith, the 'iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and shall not be found,' Jer. l. 20; and he will 'cast all their sins into the depth of the sea,' Micah vii. 16; and, to come near the phrase of my text, that he will make 'scarlet, crimson sins' 'as white as snow and wool,' Isa. i. 18; and that David saith of himself, Ps. li. 7, when God shall have purged him with hyssop, 'I shall be whiter than snow:' that, as to the matter of guilt, it shall be all one as if they had never been polluted with any such sins.

Nor is this all that this expression carrieth in it. But further, look as a man, being cleansed, is amiable and lovely in the eyes of beholders, so is a pardoned sinner in God's; he is not only freed from punishment, but accepted into favour, as fully at peace and amity with him as if he had never offended him. Hence it is that the church joineth these two together, Hosea xiv. 2, 'Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously,' or as some read it, and 'do us good.' To this purpose it is the schools say of remission of sins, it is not only *oblative\* mali*, but *collative boni*, a remotion of guilt, but a collation of good. So that, in sum, a pardoned sinner is cleansed; that is, as to those great intents and purposes of delivering him from the wrath to come, being fully reconciled to him, bestowing the sonship and inheritance upon him, he is in God's account as if he were perfectly pure and unspottedly innocent, nor had ever committed any sin against him.

And now, what should these considerations kindle in every one of us but,

1. An earnest desire and longing after this benefit. O my brethren, no misery like to that of sin, which maketh us filthy and abominable, yea, which engageth us to a debt we can never pay; no mercy like to that of pardon, which sets us free from debt, and maketh us pure in God's sight. 'O wretched man that I am' (saith the sensible sinner), who shall discharge me from this debt? If thy sins are forgiven, thy debt is discharged. Oh that this sin had never been, oh that I had never done it, saith the sorrowful sinner. Thy sins, if cleansed, are as if they had never been committed. Poor penitent! Poor, did I say? Rich, blessed penitent! Thou art vile and filthy in thine own eyes; ay! but thou art pure and clean in God's. Thou chargest thy sins home upon thy own account, but God will not call thee to account for them; so that, whereas Rachel mourned for her children because they were not, thou mayest be comforted concerning thy sins, because they are not. With what boldness may the forgiven sinner look death, and hell, and Satan, in the face, not fearing the arrest of the serjeant, nor the horror of the prison, nor the cruelty of the jailor. With what confidence may a cleansed sinner come before God's face, not doubting of acceptance and audience. No wonder if

\* Qu. 'oblative' ?—Ed.

the psalmist break forth into that sweet acclamation, Ps. xxxii. 1, 'Blessed,' or according to the Hebrew, 'Oh the blessedness of the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.'

And now (methinketh), every sinner, considering the misery on the one hand, and felicity on the other, should cry out, in words much like those of the convert Jews, 'Men and brethren, what shall I do' to have my sins pardoned? Tell me, I beseech you, what man in chains would not be at liberty? what debtor doth not long to be discharged? what malefactor desireth not to be acquitted? what leper craveth not to be cleansed? what diseased person is not restless till he be healed? And how is it that we who, by reason of sin, are all these in a spiritual senso, do not breathe and pant after the remission of our sins, which healeth, acquitteth, ransometh, discharge, and cleanseth? Nor should these meditations only kindle desires, but,

2. Quicken serious and diligent endeavours of attaining this pardon in the way which God hath prescribed; and in this respect the mercy assured layeth upon us a great obligation to perform the duty required. It is true, confession of sins in a right manner is a difficult task. Ay! but the forgiving and cleansing of sin is an excellent benefit; the sweetness of the one maketh abundant amends for the bitterness of the other. Surely to him that feeleth the weight and burden of his sins, the yoke of repentance cannot but be light; and to him that knoweth the preciousness of an healing pardon, the vomit of confession cannot be displeasing.

There is yet one thing more remaining in this second general, and that is, the extent of the act in reference to its object, expressed by the plural number, *sins*, and the universal particle *all*.

Indeed, I must prefix a limitation of this extent, and it is that which St Paul hath done to my hand, Rom. iii. 25. This forgiveness is 'of sins that are past,' not of sins to come. 'When a wicked man turneth from his wickedness' (saith the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xviii. 22), 'all the transgressions he hath committed shall not be mentioned;' not those he *shall commit*, till by actual repentance he turn from them. I nowhere read God hath made such a jubilee as one pope did, who gave a plenary indulgence, not only for sins past, but beforehand, for sins to come a long time after. It is true both things past and future are present to God, and therefore the decree of pardon extends to all times, but still the execution of that decree, the actual issuing out of that pardon, is done time by time. Indeed, when a sin is pardoned, it is perfectly pardoned, so that it can be no more forgiven than it is; but as sin is successively committed, so it is successively forgiven. Doubtless our blessed Saviour would not have commanded us to renew our prayers for forgiveness, if God did not renew forgiveness upon our penitential prayers. What need we any other

argument than that which my text affordeth, 'If we confess our sins, he forgiveth our sins.' What sins? Surely those that we confess, and not till they are confessed. Now who ever antedated confession? Indeed, it were not penitency but impudency for a man to confess a sin before he hath committed it, since whereas true confession is accompanied with a resolve of forsaking, this would be attended with a purpose of renewing our sins. Since, then, a man is not in a capacity of pardon till he have made confession, nor of confessing a sin till he have committed it, it plainly appeareth that God doth not antedate his pardons, but till sin be past, pardon is to come.

This being premised, we need not doubt to affirm, when God pardons one sin, no one sin is left unpardoned. *Larga Dei bonitas veniam non dimittit*, the acquittance which mercy gives is not in part but in full. Indeed, if God shall pardon some sins, and not others, he would at the same time be a friend and an enemy, and we should be at once both happy and miserable, which are manifest contradictions. Besides, God doth nothing in vain, and it were in vain to cleanse from any, if not from all sins. One leak unstoppped will sink the ship, one sore not healed may kill the body, and one sin unpardoned may destroy the soul. No wonder that the Scripture still useth a word of extent: thus it is said in the parable, Mat. xviii. 32, 'The Lord forgave his servant all his debt;' 'Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back,' saith Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 17; and 'Wash me thoroughly from my sins, and blot out all mine offences,' so David prayeth, Ps. li. 2.

To enlarge this comfortable truth, be pleased to observe both the ways of expression here used, and accordingly take it in a double variation.

1. *Sins* in the plural number. He doth not only forgive one, but many; nor doth he only forgive once, but often. He will 'abundantly pardon,' saith the prophet Isaiah, chap. lv. 7, or according to the original, he will 'multiply to pardon.' The Rabbins say, that if a man sin thrice, it is pardonable, but not the fourth. God is far more 'rich in mercy.' He that cast out a legion of devils, will cast out a legion of sins; he that bids us forgive our brother not only seven times, but seventy times seven, Mat. xviii. 22, will certainly be as abundant in forgiving us. The sea can as easily drown an whole host of men as twenty soldiers; and where God forgiveth sin, he casts them into a sea. The Lord in the parable forgave his servant not one, or ten, or an hundred, but ten thousand talents. Were all the sins of the world the sins of one man, yet they were to his mercy but a drop of a bucket to the ocean.

2. *All* unrighteousness, of what nature, degree soever; 'all manner of sin and blasphemy, shall be forgiven,' saith our blessed Lord, Mat. xii. 31; yea, that the sin against the Holy Ghost is irremissible, it is not for the malignity so much of the sin as the sinner,



because he that once commits it, can never penitently confess it. Not only pence but pounds, motes but beams, mites but talents, are within the compass of remission. There is a necessity of pardon to the least, and there is (one excepted) a possibility of pardon for the greatest sin. Christ cured 'all manner of diseases,' Mat. iv. 23, and God cleanseth all manner of sins. The foulest rags may become white paper, and mercy crosseth not only the black but the red lines of our scarlet sins out of God's book. To this purpose it is that, in the name of God proclaimed by Moses, he is said to 'forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin,' where, though there be neither the plural number, nor an universal particle, yet there is a threefold noun which answereth both, and is not unfitly expounded, as extending both to original and actual, and to great as well as small sins.

And now (my brethren) what abundant consolation doth this afford us against the sense of our manifold and mighty sins!\* so that we may well take up the challenge of St Paul, Rom. viii. 33, 'Who shall lay anything to our charge?' What singular admiration should ravish us in the apprehension of this *magna et magna misericordia*, manifold and great mercy! saying with the prophet Micah, chap. vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that taketh away iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage?' What exceeding gratulation should flow from us, if at any time God give us assurance of this

\* Vide Fer. in loc.

general pardon, exciting ourselves with the prophet David, Ps. ciii. 1-3, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, praise his holy name: who forgiveth all thy iniquity; and healeth all thy diseases.' Only let me close up with a needful caution: God forgiveth and cleanseth all our sins, but it is if we confess them; and as we expect that his remission, so he expecteth that our confession, should be proportionable to our commissions. Now our confession is then answerable, when our sorrow, which ever attendeth confession, is in some measure correspondent to our sins. Believe it (brethren), the pardon of many, of great sins, is not to be had upon the same easy terms with that of infirmities, and seldom offences. As our sins are more, our tears must be more; as our transgressions are greater, our humiliations must be deeper. If our offences have been, not gnats, but camels, our sorrow must be, not a drop, but an ocean. Scarlet sins call for bloody tears; and if Peter sin heinously, he must weep bitterly. If, then, thy former life hath been a cord of iniquity, twisted with many threads, a writing full of great blots, a course spotted with various, and those grievous sins, multiply thy confessions and enlarge thy humiliations, double thy fastings and treble thy prayers, pour out thy tears and fetch deep sighs; in a word, iterate and aggravate thy acknowledgments, though yet, as the apostle saith in another case, I say in this, 'Grieve not as without hope' that, upon thy sincere and suitable repentance, divine goodness will forgive thee thy sins, and cleanse thee from all unrighteousness.

## SERMON XVIII.

*If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—*

1 JOHN I. 9.

THE text is a promise, and promises are the most comfortable part of Scripture. The whole word of God is, according to St Peter's metaphor, 1 Peter ii. 2, 'sincere milk,' and these are the cream of that milk; according to St Paul's similitude, 2 Cor. iv. 7, a treasure, and these are the pearls of greatest worth in that treasure; according to David's comparison, Ps. cxix. 105, a light, and these are the brightest beams of that light. In them, all our good is contained; by them, all our hope is sustained; through them, all our comfort is attained.

The promise of the text is one of those which the apostle Peter, 2 Peter i. 4, calls 'exceeding great and precious promises,' because of that which is an exceeding great and precious blessing, the remission of our sins; that which is the sole spring of our comfort, so that all waters which flow not from this spring, though they may be sweet in the mouth, will prove bitter in the belly; that which is the queen of mercies, so that wheresoever she goeth, a train of blessings attend

upon her: since, if sin be pardoned, we have grace *from*, peace *with*, access *to*, joy *in* God; yea, all needful comforts both for this life and that which is to come.

But though the text contain a promise, and the promise a blessing of so great a value, yet if it were not as sure in the performance as it is sweet in the promise, we could not with joy draw water out of it. And therefore he lets us see this well of salvation is digged so deep, that the water cannot fail; this fabric of comfort is founded so strong, that it cannot fall, if we be not a-wanting to ourselves in fulfilling the condition. God's justice and fidelity will not suffer him to be a-wanting to us in performing the promise; for 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive,' &c.

It is that part of the text I am now to handle, the certainty of the mercy; in those words, 'he is faithful and just.'

To ascertain us of the effect, our apostle mindeth

us of the causes; and here are two sorts of efficient causes set before us: the principal in the word *he*, and the internal impulsive in those words, *faithful and just*. And surely when we consider both *quis*, who it is that conferreth this benefit, and *qualis*, how faithful and just he is, we may certainly conclude the accomplishment of it. Of each therefore in their order.

The principal efficient cause of remission is *he*; and if you ask who this *he* is, you must look back, and you shall find it to be *him* with whom we have fellowship, who is light itself, and so no other than God himself. And, indeed, such is the nature of this blessing, that if he did not do it, none else could; it being not only his act, but his prerogative, and so his only act, to cleanse and forgive a sinner. 'I, even I, am he' (saith God himself, Isa. xliii. 25) 'that blotteth out thy transgressions;' by which reduplication he intendeth an appropriation, as if he had said, I, and none but I. 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?' saith the prophet, Micah vii, 18; by which is no doubt intended both an affirmative and a negative: the one, that whosoever pardoneth must be a God; the other, that there is no God like to him for pardoning, and therefore, indeed, whatever else besides him is called God, is no God. In this, doubtless, those pharisees, Mark ii. 7, Luke v. 21, spoke truth, though with a malicious intention against him who is the truth, when they said, 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?' And therefore, from that very position, St Ambrose\* proveth the deity of the Holy Ghost, and St Cyril† most properly, the deity of the Son of God.

And indeed it must needs be only in God's power to forgive, because it is only against him that the offence is committed. It is no doubt a clear truth, that only he to whom the injury is done can remit the doing of it. Now David saith, and most fully, Ps. li. 4, 'Against thee, against thee only, I have sinned;' nor is that only true, because he (being a king) was accountable to none but God for what he had done, but because sin properly so called is only against him of whose law it is a breach, and that is God himself. Thus St Cyril ‡ argueth, It belongeth only to God to loose men from their sins, for who can free from the transgression of the law but the author of it! And, accordingly St Cyprian, § Let no man cheat and delude himself, only God must shew mercy, since the servant cannot grant an indulgence for the fault which is done against his lord. Sin is a spot in God's sight, and none can hide it from him unless he pleaseth to turn away his face. It is a debt in God's book, and who dares to blot anything out of his book but himself? If any man shall pretend to forgive another's debt, he offereth a double injury; to the debtor, by deceiving him with false hopes, and to the creditor

by usurping his power; hence it is that we find those exclusive propositions frequent in the ancients. St Chrysostom\* often, None can forgive sin but God alone; to forgive sin belongeth to none other; to forgive sins is possible to God alone. And Gregory the Great, † Thou who only sparest, thou who alone forgivest. And Optatus, ‡ It is only God's act to cleanse and make white our scarlet sins. This is a part of God's name which is incommunicable, because an expression of his nature; he is 'the Lord, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin,' Exod. xxxiv. 7; an emanation of that glory which, he saith, he 'will not give to another,' Isa. xlvi. 11.

That which may seem to contradict this truth is that power which the ministers of the gospel have in the point of forgiveness, insomuch that our blessed Saviour expressly saith: John xx. 23, 'Whose sins you remit, they are remitted.'

To clear this scruple, be pleased to know that,

1. Whatever power the priest hath of forgiving, it is then only effectual when the person is rightly qualified. We are stewards, and must not be like the unjust steward, strike out our master's debt without his leave, or otherwise than according to his prescription; we are ambassadors, and therefore have not power to proclaim war or conclude peace between God and man, according to our own discretion, but his direction, to wit, upon the testification of that which we at least probably conceive is unfeigned repentance; and therefore saith Tolet § well, *Quod in terra sacerdos, in celo Deus*, what the priest doth on earth is ratified in heaven, but *clave non errante*, not when he turneth the key the wrong way; so that if the confession of the penitent be not sincere, the absolution of the priest is invalid.

2. But further, the power which a priest hath upon penitent confession of forgiving is but ministerial, not magisterial; *ministri sunt, pro iudicibus haberi nolunt*, they are only ministers, not judges; so St Austin. ¶ It is the king that grants the pardon, they are only officers that bring it.

If you desire more particularly to know how far the power of a minister extends to forgiving, I answer briefly,

1. They have power by virtue of their office to intercede with God for sinners, and therefore the sick person is to 'call for the elders of the church,' that they may 'pray for him that his sins may be forgiven him,' James v. 14, 15.

2. They have the word of reconciliation committed to them, wherein the promise of pardon is revealed and exhibited. By them the holy sacraments are administered, which are the means of conveying pardon to those that are rightly qualified. To which purpose

\* Chrysost. in 2 Cor. iii. hom. 6; 1 Cor. xv. hom. 40.

† Greg. in Ps. penit.

‡ Optat. contr. Donat. l. 5.

§ Tolet. in Joh.

¶ Aug. in Joh. Tri. 5.

\* Ambros. de Sp. S. l. iii. c. 9.

† Cyr. Alex. Thesaur. l. ii. c. 4.

‡ Cyr. in l. de rect. fid. ad Regin.

§ Cypr. de lapsis.



it is that Ferus \* saith appositely, Ministers forgive sins, inasmuch as they are instrumental in those several ordinances by which God remitteth sin.

3. They have authority of releasing those censures which have been passed upon sinners, for the scandal given by their flagitious practices to the church.

4. Finally, they have power particularly to declare that God hath forgiven their sins, in whom they observe the signs of repentance. As they 'pray us to be reconciled to God,' so they may assure us upon our contrition that God is reconciled to us. Thus Durand † asserteth that God forgiveth by himself, releasing us from the bond of our sins, and the priest absolveth by declaring that remission to be granted. And Ferus, ‡ though a Jesuit, saith that man doth not properly forgive, but only assure that God hath forgiven. Look as the priest in the law was said to cleanse the leper, because he did pronounce him clean (saith the master of the sentences §), so do the ministers of the gospel forgive, because they pronounce to us that God forgiveth; and in this sense our church understood it, and therefore saith in the form of absolution, || He hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. Thus the ministers are instrumental in this work, and their power, as appeareth by what hath been said, is partly declarative and partly operative; but still the principal efficient conferring this benefit is God, and God alone.

The use therefore which we are to make of this truth is, for direction and imitation.

1. Be we directed whither to address ourselves for pardon in the sense of our sins. With the prodigal, let us resolve to go to our Father, and, after David's pattern, let us implore God's mercy.

Indeed, since God hath set ministers in his church for this end, that by their help we may obtain the pardon of our sins, and the comfortable assurance of it, we must not neglect, much less despise, their assistance; and whereas what others do only in a way of charity, they do in a way of authority, having power committed to them for this end, we must prefer their help before what private Christians can afford us. In which respect I dare boldly affirm that many people want that comfortable sense of the pardon of their sins, which they might attain to did they consult with a faithful minister, declare their sins together with their repentance to him, earnestly and humbly desiring a declarative absolution from him.

\* Fer. in Joh.

† Deus per se dimittit peccatum relaxando debitum poenae, &c. Sacerdotes solvunt dimissionem factam offendendo. [Qu. 'declarando' ?—Ed.]—Dur. l. 4, dist. 18.

‡ Fer. in Mat.

§ In remittendis et retinendis culpis id juris et officii habent evangelici, quod sub lege legales sacerdotes in curandis leprosis.—Lumb. dist. 18, l. 4.

|| Liturg. of the Church of England.

But yet before and above all other means, let us seek God by prayer, and wrestle with him for this great mercy. Our church hath taught her ministers when they absolve to prefix a prayer to Christ, that he would absolve a poor penitent; and as you desire absolution from the minister, so you must direct your prayer to God, that he would speak peace to you, so much the rather because though he is pleased oft-times by his ministers to give ease to burdened sinners, and accordingly we are to make use of them for that end, yet the conscience can find no ease from the minister unless he be pleased by the inward testimony of his Spirit to seal a pardon to it; so true is that of Elihu, Job xxxiv. 29, 'When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?'

2. But we exhorted to imitate God in this gracious act. He forgiveth our sins against him, let us forgive the injuries others do against us. This was St Paul's counsel to the Ephesians, chap. iv. 32, and that upon this very ground, 'Be you kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you,' where the *as* is both model and causal.

*As*, to wit, in the same manner as, God doth forgive us, we must others. Indeed, the parallel holds not every way, for whereas God doth not forgive sins but to those that confess and bemoan them, we are bound to forgive those who do not confess but persist in their offering wrong to us, according to the precept of 'blessing them that curse us,' Mat. v. 44. And this by the way would be taken notice of in answer to that Socinian argument against satisfaction, from the parallel of God's forgiving and man's, since by the same reason that they say God should forgive without satisfaction, because he requires man to do so, they may as well say he should forgive without confession. It is not then in every respect that this similitude agrees; but as God, when he forgiveth, is fully reconciled, forgetting all that is past as if it had not been without any desire of, nay, resolving against all future revenge, *ita purè et perfectè*, so purely and perfectly, saith Anselm,\* ought we to forgive our brethren.

And as thus in the same manner, so likewise *on this ground*. And so the *as* is causal; *because* God for Christ's sake forgiveth us, we for God's sake ought to forgive one another. We find the lord in the parable wroth with his servant, to whom he had pardoned all his debt, because he was so cruel not to forgive his fellow-servant; and we pray in the Lord's prayer, Mat. vi. 12, for forgiveness of our trespasses, 'as we forgive others.' So necessary a connection is there betwixt these two, that our forgiveness is a condition of God's, and God's is to be a cause of ours. Thus God doth seem as it were to put it in our power whether or no we will have our sins forgiven, by making our forgiveness a condition of it; and as at first he made us after his

\* Anselm. in Eph.

own likeness, so he still taketh care that we may become like to him. And surely as it is God's goodness to require no more from, than what he performeth to us, so is it but reason we should at his command perform that to others which we expect from him. And so much of the first, the principal efficient *he*.

2. The internal impulsive causes here specified are two, to wit, God's faithfulness and justice; and these I may well call the two pillars which (like Jachim and Boaz, 1 Kings vii. 15, 2 Chron. iii. 17) support our faith; compare to the two cherubims which look toward the mercy-seat, whence pardon is vouchsafed; resemble to the olive trees, whence floweth the oil, Zech. iv. 14, or to the breasts, Cant. iv. 5, which yield the milk of heavenly consolation to troubled consciences.

1. The first here mentioned is God's fidelity, 'he is faithful;' for the opening whereof be pleased to observe,

1. That God hath made many promises of forgiving sins, and cleansing from iniquity, to those that acknowledge them. To this purpose St Cyprian saith,\* Christ teaching us to pray for, assures us God hath made promise of, forgiving our trespasses. Indeed, God hath nowhere promised *peccanti crastinum*, to-morrow to the peccant, but everywhere *penitenti veniam*, pardon to the repentant. 'If my people shall humble themselves and pray, I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sins;' so we read in the Chronicles, 2 Chron. vii. 14. 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;' so runs the promise in Isaiah, chap. lv. 7. 'If the wicked will turn from all the sins that he hath committed, all his transgressions, they shall not be mentioned to him;' so saith God by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xviii. 21, 22. Thus I might bring forth a jury of textual witnesses to prove this assertion, but those already mentioned may suffice instead of all.

2. Know therefore, further, that in whatsoever God hath promised he is faithful, and that both in respect of intention and execution.

1. Of intention; inasmuch as his promises are the declaration of his purpose, revelation of his decree, and manifestation of his good will towards poor sinners. God hath spoken nothing but what he meaneth; he doth not outwardly pretend to forgive, and inwardly meditate revenge, but his words are the true characters of his thoughts.

2. Of execution; inasmuch as his promises are not *yea* but *amen*, made, but made good. As God hath a mouth to speak, so he hath a hand to fulfil whatsoever he hath spoken, 1 Kings viii. 24. That name *Jehovah* (which is as it were a proper name) signifieth not only his being of himself, but his giving a being to all his promises; and, therefore, whereas God had made

\* Qui orare nos docuit, &c.—*Cypr. de orat. dom.*

a promise to the patriarchs of the land of Canaan, yet inasmuch as the accomplishment was not in their days, it is said, he was not known to them by his name *Jehovah*, Exod. vi. 3. As God saith nothing but what he meaneth, so he saith nothing but what he doth; and as his heart thinketh, so his hand acteth what his tongue speaketh; he many times performeth more, but never less, than he promiseth.

And now, both these being put together, that God hath promised pardon, and his promise is stable, well might St John say, 'he is faithful to forgive,' this being that which his faithfulness in keeping promise obligeth him to. It is fitly observable how the prophet Micah, chap. vii. 18, 19, joineth these two together, 'He will cast our sins into the sea, and he will perform his truth to Abraham;' as if God could not perform his truth, except he cast our sins into the sea. So that look as if we pray, he is faithful to hear; if we mourn, he is faithful to comfort; so if we confess, he is faithful to forgive.

Indeed, the glory of God is much concerned in his being faithful to forgive, not only because of the thing itself, since if it be 'the glory of a man to pass by offences,' much more is it of God; but likewise because of his word which is passed for granting a pardon, and therefore cannot be recalled, retarded, impeded. For if God doth promise any thing which he doth not effect, it must be either for want of wisdom in foreseeing what might be done to prevent it, or for want of power to effect what he intends, or for want of stability, as if his mind were changed, and his good will altered; any of which, if they could be fastened upon God, were an high dishonour, and but to imagine them is blasphemy. That therefore it may appear his wisdom is infallible, his power irresistible, his will unchangeable, and so his name may be glorious, he must be faithful in accomplishing, as all other, so this promise of forgiving.

And now there are two graces which this fidelity of God should teach us, namely, *fideltas et fides*, faithfulness and faith.

1. What obligation doth God's faithfulness lay upon us to be faithful, and that both to him and one another!

(1.) To him, as he hath promised to forgive us, so we have promised to give ourselves to him. As he hath promised to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, so we have promised to him in our baptism to cleanse ourselves by renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil. And now, is God faithful to us, and shall we be false to him? He is a God keeping covenant and mercy with us, and shall we be a people not stedfast in our covenant with him?

(2.) To one another. Let us not 'speak fair,' and yet have 'seven abominations in our hearts;' but since the tongue is the heart's herald, let it ever declare the master's message; yea, let not only our affections but actions keep even pace with our expres-



sions. We must not be open-mouthed and close-fisted, long-tongued and short-handed, to make golden promises and leaden performances; like the nobleman who had two chests, the one whereof he called *promise*, that was ever open; thither he sent all his petitioners, and there they only found *hope*; the other he called *performance*, that was always locked, and no key could open it but *necessity*. Far be this from true Christians, who must be followers of God, Eph. vi. 1, and that especially in a faithful discharge of their promises.

2. What encouragement doth God's faithfulness give to our faith? Sarah, 'judging him faithful that had promised,' believed, and that against hope, Heb. xi. 11. Since God is abundant in truth, we may well be abundant in confidence. Indeed, God's fidelity should draw out the actings of our faith, and the acting of faith will as it were draw forth God's fidelity. Very observable to this purpose is that expression of the psalmist, Ps. xxxi. 19, 'Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought before the sons of men for them that trust in thee!' In the former clause, God's goodness is said to be laid up; in the latter, to be wrought. Goodness is laid up in the promise, wrought in the performance; and that goodness which is laid up is wrought for them that trust in God; and thus, as God's faithfulness engageth us to believe, so our faith as it were engageth God's faithfulness to perform the promise.

More particularly, let this consideration strengthen faith in believing the pardon of our sin upon our performance of the condition. Ah, thou despairing sinner, whoever thou art, what dost thou hereby but question, nay, deny God's faithfulness? so that what our apostle saith in the next verse, of those who 'say they have not sinned,' the same may I say of them, who say their sin is greater than can be forgiven, they make God a liar. Little dost thou think how, whilst thou darest not (as thou conceivest) misapply the promises, thou callest the truth of God in question, and thereby offerest to him an high indignity.

But consider, thou drooping soul, what provision God hath made against thy infidelity. To assure thee of his fidelity, thou hast his word, nay, more than so, his oath—As I live, saith the Lord—nay more than so, both in writing, and that writing hath seals annexed to it, namely, the holy sacraments. How mayest thou, confessing thy sins, plead with God upon all these; and as Jacob used this argument, 'Lord, thou hast said thou wouldst do me good,' Gen. xxxii. 12, so mayest thou, Lord, thou hast said, thou hast sworn, that thou wilt forgive the sins of them that turn to thee. I have thy hand for it in the Scriptures, thy seal in the sacraments, so be it to thy servant according as thou hast spoken and sworn, and written and sealed!

2. That which next cometh to be considered is God's justice, in those words, *he is just*. Not to mention all

the interpretations which expositors give of this word, I shall only acquaint you with three, and insist upon the last, as being (at least in my opinion) most congruous.

1. Some interpreters make *faithful* and *just* to be synonymes, therefore he is faithful and just, because it is just he should be faithful.\* In this respect the Hebrew word  $\text{תָּצַד}$ , which signifieth *truth*, is by the Septuagint translated  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta$ , that signifieth *righteousness*; nor is it without reason, because it is a righteous thing to be true. Before a man maketh a promise, he is free to make it or not; but when he hath made it, he is not free to keep it or not. By promise a man becometh a debtor, and for one to pay his debt is no more than just.† Indeed, this is not exactly true in regard of God, because we never so fully perform the condition, but it is justly liable to exception. Yet after a sort it is that which he accounts himself engaged to in point of justice, to perform all his promises; and therefore, though it is mere mercy which maketh, it is justice which fulfilleth, the promise. This interpretation Socinus layeth hold on, hereby to evade the doctrine of satisfaction, which this word, according to its proper sense, doth clearly favour. But the design of the Holy Ghost being in these words to strengthen our weak faith in believing the pardon of sin, I conceive we shall do best to expound the words in that way which may most conduce to this end; and that is, as affording not only a single, but a double prop to our faith, from a double attribute in God, and therefore I waive this interpretation.

2. Others there are ‡ who, distinguishing these two, understand by justice, mercy. So Grotius here saith, I interpret *just* to be *good, gentle*; and Illyricus observeth, that *righteousness* is sometimes taken for *benignity* and clemency. In this respect it is that  $\text{חַסֵּד}$ , which signifieth *mercy*, is sometimes by the Septuagint rendered  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta$ , that signifieth *righteousness*. Agreeable hereunto, the Greek word for *alms* is by the Syriac rendered *righteousness*, Mat. vi. 1. The merciful man's bounty is by the psalmist, Ps. cxii. 9, and St Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 10, called *righteousness*; yea, upon this account 'mercy and righteousness,' 'gracious and righteous,' are joined together, Ps. ciii. 17, cxvi. 5; and David promiseth, if God would 'deliver him from blood-guiltiness,' he would 'sing aloud of his righteousness,' Ps. li. 12.

And now, according to this interpretation, we see another impulsive cause of forgiveness, namely, the grace, mercy, and clemency of God. Among others, there are two Greek words by which pardon is set forth, that excellently confirm this truth,  $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\zeta\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$  and  $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\theta\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\iota$ : the former by St Paul, Col. ii. 13, which, coming from  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$ , signifieth to forgive freely, and intimateth free grace to be the spring of pardon; the latter by the author to the Hebrews, chap. viii. 12,

\* Vide Sanchheim Exercitat.

† Carthus. Lap. Soc. in loc.

‡ Grot. Illyr. in loc.

in that quotation of the prophet, 'I will be merciful to their sins, and their transgressions,' which is by shewing mercy to the sinner in the forgiveness of his sins. So that we may hence learn to what we are to ascribe the pardon of our sins, merely the good will and grace and mercy of God. Indeed, we shall still find all those benefits (especially spiritual) which we receive, attributed to mercy: the regeneration of our nature; 'according to his mercy he hath begotten us,' 2 Peter i. 3; the salvation of our souls: 'according to his mercy he saved us,' Titus iii. 5; and the 'remission of our sins through the tender mercy of our God,' Luke i. 76. Oh let us admire the bowels of love, the riches of grace, the treasures of mercy, which are manifested in pardoning and cleansing our sins.

3. But though this interpretation may be received, yet since it is a good rule, in expounding Scripture, to keep to the *proper* meaning of the words, if there be not very good reason to the contrary, and there being no reason why we should here recede from, I have chosen rather to adhere to the literal sense of the word *just*.

For though it be true that,

1. The commission of sin deserveth punishment, and therefore justice, which giveth every one their due, calls for the punishing, not the remitting of sin; and

2. The confession of sin cannot (as hath been before asserted) deserve pardon, because it is no proportionable compensation of the offence.

Upon which grounds it appeareth, that this justice which forgiveth cannot be in respect of us; yet it still is a truth in regard of Christ, God is just to forgive; so that as Gualter\* well, he cannot but forgive, unless he will be unjust to his own Son. And inasmuch as our apostle, in the foregoing verse save one, expressly attributes this cleansing to Christ's blood, this interpretation of justice is doubtless most genuine and congruous.

To clear briefly and perspicuously this sweet truth of pardoning justice, be pleased to know that,

1. The maledictory sentence of death denounced by the law against sinners was inflicted by God upon Christ. This is that which the prophet Isaiah positively asserts, chap. liii. 5, where he saith, 'The chastisement' (that is, the punishment, called a chastisement, because inflicted by a father, and only for a time) 'of our peace was upon him;' and again, ver. 7, 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,' which, according to the genuine sense of the original, is better rendered, 'it was exacted,' to wit, the punishment of our sin, and 'he was afflicted,' or 'he answered,' to wit, to the demand of the penalty.

It may be here inquired, how it can stand with God's justice to inflict punishment upon the guiltless? And if this doubt be not cleared, we shall stumble at the threshold, and the foundation of this pardoning

\* Gualt. in loc.

justice will be laid in injustice; and truly, when we find God saying, Ezek. xviii. 4, 'The soul which sinneth shall die,' and asserting those who condemn the righteous as an abomination to him, it is hard to imagine how he can himself justly punish the innocent for the nocent.

To remove this scruple, consider,

1. That God did inflict death on Christ is undeniable, and who may question the justice of his actions, whenas things are therefore just, because he wills them to be done, whose will is the supreme rule of justice!

2. There cannot be a more necessitating reason of God's afflicting Christ by death than this; so that if it be not just for God to inflict it upon him on this ground, it is much less upon any other. That Christ should die for the confirmation of his doctrine was needless; it was done sufficiently by miracles. To make way by death to his glory was not necessary; he might have been translated, as were Enoch and Elijah. To die only as an example of patience and fortitude to his followers, is a far less cogent cause than to die as an example of God's justice and severity against sin; nor need he have died for that end, since the death of any of his apostles might have been exemplary in that kind. Finally, had he died only for the declaration of God's immense love to us, and not for the demonstration of his severe justice against sin, whilst he had been so loving to us, he had been little other than cruel to Christ. There wanted not other ways to declare his tender affection to mankind, but there was no other way to declare his impartial justice against sin; so that, since the inflicting of death on Christ as a punishment carrieth with it a more urging inducement than any other cause assigned, and since the less cause there is of inflicting death upon any, the greater must needs be the injustice in the inflicter; it evidently followeth that there is nothing can so much clear the justice of God in this act, as (that which the orthodox asserts to be the cause of it) his undergoing the penalty due to our sins.

3. But further, Christ becoming man is joined to us in nature, and undertaking in our behalf, is co-joined to us by suretyship, and *in sensu forensi*, a judicial construction, one with us. We see in human courts the law taketh as much hold of the surety as of the debtor; and why, then, should it be unjust for God to punish Christ engaging for our debt? Indeed, upon this account the Messiah, though innocent, became (after a sort) guilty; not as guilt noteth a due deserving of punishment in respect of sin, either personally inherent, or at least naturally imputed; but only so far as it noteth an obligation to the punishment in a judicial way, as being our surety; in which respect that phrase of St Paul is very apposite, 2 Cor. v. 20, 'He was made sin for us.'

4. Lastly, To put all out of doubt. The undergoing this punishment was Christ's voluntary act, who,



as he had 'power,' so he wanted not will 'to lay down his life.' He was not sent for this end without his own consent. As God laid, so he took, our iniquities upon him. The curse to which we were subject (saith Theodorus\*) he assumed upon himself, of his own accord; the death that was not due to him, he underwent, that we might not undergo that death which was due to us, saith St Gregory†; he made himself a debtor for us, who were debtors, and therefore the creditor exacts it from him, saith Arnoldus.‡ Now *volenti non fit injuria*; so the moralist most truly, if another will voluntarily substitute himself in the room of a malefactor, though the inferior judge, who is bound by the law, cannot, yet the superior governor may without injustice accept of it. When therefore God saith, 'The soul that sinneth shall die,' he only sets forth the ordinary course of his providence, which impedeth not but that Christ, being ready to die in our stead who had sinned, God being the supreme ruler and judge, might most justly inflict it on him.

2. This punishment thus inflicted on Christ, is a plenary satisfaction to God's justice. It is true, this word *satisfaction* is not formally expressed in Scripture, yet there are equivalent phrases. Such, among others, is that phrase so often used of *redeeming*; and as if the Holy Ghost would prevent that Socinian exposition of (*redimere pro aliquo modo liberare*) *redeeming*, as if it were only in a large sense no more than *delivering*, it is St Paul's express phrase, 'Ye are bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20; and that this price may appear to be of full value, it is opposed to, and advanced above, corrupt gold and silver by the apostle Peter, 1 Peter i. 18, 19. Nor is it any infringement to the merit of this price and worth of this satisfaction, that the suffering of Christ was not every way the same that we should have undergone, since it is all one whether the debt be paid in the same coin or no, so it be to the full value. Christ suffered the punishment of our sins, as Calovius well observeth,§ though not *secundum identitatem omnimodam*, yet *per aequivalentiam*, the same in every respect, yet equivalent to it. Indeed, what satisfaction could justice demand more than infinite; and the suffering of an infinite person could not be less. Whence followeth,

3. In the last place, that God's justice being satisfied for our offences, it cannot but remit those offences to us. As the creditor cannot demand that of the debtor which the surety hath already paid, so neither can God exact the punishment of us which Christ hath suffered, and therefore it is just with him to forgive and cleanse us.

The case being thus cleared, it will be altogether needless to inquire whether it had been injustice in

God to forgive without satisfaction. St Austin's determination is very solid,\* there wanted not to God another possible way (and if it were unjust, it were impossible), but this of satisfaction was most agreeable to divine wisdom. Before God did decree this way, it might be free to have used it or not; but *in* decreeing, this seemed most convenient, and *after*, it became necessary, so that there can be no remission without it; and however it might not have been unjust with God to have forgiven *without*, yet we are sure it is most just with him to forgive *upon*, satisfaction.

There is only one objection which remaineth to be answered, and it is that which seemeth to carry a great deal of strength in it, namely, that forgiveness is a free act in God, springing from grace and mercy; and if it be of grace, how can it be of justice? That which is of grace is freely done, and might justly have been otherwise; that which is of justice, there is a necessary obligation to the performance of it; and what more opposite? Besides, that which addeth the greater force to this argument is, that remission and satisfaction are altogether inconsistent. A man cannot be said to forgive that which he is fully paid; so that plenary satisfaction leaveth no place for remission.

To remove this doubt, you must know that things in their own nature opposite may, according to different respects, concur to the same work, and therefore forgiveness of sin may be an act both of mercy and justice, in a several reference. In respect of *us*, it is an act of mercy, mere mercy, and therefore we are said by St Paul to be 'justified freely,' Rom. iii. 24, 25; in respect of *Christ*, it is an act of justice, and therefore he is said by the same apostle in the same place, to 'set forth Christ a propitiation to declare his righteousness.'† In these different considerations it is that remission and satisfaction are consistent, inasmuch as the satisfaction was by Christ, not us, and the remission is to us, not Christ.

For the further clearing of this answer, be pleased to observe, that,

1. This satisfaction was neither performed nor procured by us. We did not, could not, do it ourselves; we did not desire, could not obtain, it at the hands of Christ; it was no other than God himself, the injured person, who provided, and that no other than his own Son to perform this work. If a creditor should of his own good will appoint his son to pay the debt, might he not be said to forgive the debtor? And would it not be interpreted an act of benignity? Though therefore God sent his Son to satisfy for our sins, yet he is truly said to remit it to us; and though upon satisfaction it is an act of justice, yet it was mercy which afforded the way and means of accomplishing this satisfaction.

\* Theod. Disp. l. xv. c. 5.

† Greg. mer. l. iii. c. xiii.

‡ Arnold. de Sept. verb. tr. i.

§ Vide Calov. Socinianis. Prot.

\* Aug. de Trinit. l. xiii. c. x.

† Vide Orig. Tolet. in Rom.

2. This satisfaction, though tendered by Christ, might not have been accepted by God. To this purpose it is which Grotius excellently observeth,\* that one man be discharged by the punishment of another, there must intervene an act of the supreme governor, and that no other than an act of grace; for the law requireth that the punishment should be inflicted on the person offending, and accordingly justice might exact the penalty from the person himself; so that notwithstanding satisfaction be made by another, yet there must be a gracious act, which in respect of the law is relaxation, and of the offender remissive. That therefore God is pleased to accept from Christ what he might in justice have required of us, is from no other cause than his gracious clemency; and in this respect it is that the case between God and a sinner is not like that between a creditor and a debtor, but a king and a malefactor, because, if the debt be paid, whether by the debtor or the surety, it matters not. Nor can the creditor receiving the debt, from whomsoever it be, if upon the debtor's account, be said to forgive him his debt; whereas the malefactor is bound by the law to suffer in his own person, and therefore the king accepting another in his stead, is truly said to pardon him, as dispensing with that which his law in the rigour of it did require.

To sum it up, remission and satisfaction are not repugnant, when that satisfaction is accepted which might have been refused, and when the person who receiveth the benefit is no way contributory to the performing of it. Now both these are manifest in Christ's satisfaction; for that which we do (and not that neither of ourselves, but by God's grace) is only to the applying, not at all to the performing, of this satisfaction; and though Christ's satisfaction was so full, that it could not be excepted against, as to the equivalency, nay, redundancy of its value, yet God might not have accepted of it in our behalf, had he not so decreed of his mere goodness. By all which it appeareth, that there is a sweet contemperation of justice and mercy in this work; so that we may truly say in the remission of our sins, Ps. lxxxv. 10, 'Righteousness and peace meet together, and kiss each other;' whilst justice hath satisfaction in the punishment of the offence, and mercy sheweth itself by appointing Christ to make this satisfaction, and accepting of it in the sinner's behalf, whereby he is as to himself freely and graciously, as to Christ justly and righteously, remitted.

And surely this being well considered, every crevice will be stopped at which despair might creep in. When a sinner is sensible of sins, there is nothing more affrighteth him than the meditation of God's justice; but see, Christ having made satisfaction, that justice, which was before a cause of fear, becometh a support of our hope; and when that which only could discourage us is a ground of comfort, what can terrify

\* Grot. de Satisfact.

us? If, then, at any time upon remembrance of the guilt of sin we begin to faint, considering that God is just to hate and punish sin committed, let us upon remembrance of Christ's satisfaction, which God hath accepted in behalf of all believing and penitent sinners, be established and quieted in our minds, considering that God is just to forgive sin confessed. Indeed, the debt being paid by Christ, God's very justice (as I may say with reverence) would trouble him, if he should not give in the bond, and give out an acquittance. The pardon of believers' sins is as it were the wages of his obedience, a legacy he bequeathed at his death, yea, the end of shedding his blood, so that as the wages of an hireling detained, the will of one that is dead (having left wherewithal to satisfy) unperformed, yea, the blood of one suffering in another's stead, if that party should notwithstanding be executed, must needs cry, and that aloud, for justice, which is hereby very much violated. So would Christ's death, and that even against God himself, if he should not grant a pardon to them that believingly and penitently confess. Go, then, thou burdened sinner, to God with boldness, and in an humble confidence sue out thy pardon, not only at the throne of grace, but the bar of justice, in these or the like expressions, Lord, thou hast punished my sins in thy Son, wilt thou punish them in me? Thou hast accepted that suffering of thy Son as the punishment of my sin, and therefore thou canst not in justice exact it of me, for this were to punish twice for one offence, which thy justice cannot but abhor.

To close up with a needful admonition, very fit to be annexed to this ample consolation, that the dogs may not eat the children's bread. As God is 'faithful and just to forgive the sins' of those that confess them, and to 'cleanse them from all unrighteousness,' so he is no less faithful and just to punish their sins who conceal and continue therein, and condemn them for all their unrighteousness. God (beloved) hath denounced as many severe threats against the impenitent, as he hath pronounced comfortable promises to the penitent, and his faithfulness no less strongly binds him to perform the one than the other. Christ hath satisfied God's justice for the sins of penitent confessors, in which respect it is just with God to forgive them; but he hath not satisfied for impenitent committers, in which respect it is just with God to punish them in their own persons for their iniquities; and therefore let the one tremble, whilst the other rejoice in these divine attributes of justice and fidelity.

And thus, through God's assistance, I have finished the first chapter of this first epistle, wherein you have heard Christ's divinity and humanity illustrated, the gospel's excellency and certainty demonstrated, hypocrisy detected, piety encouraged, arrogance confuted, and repentance comforted; so that what St Paul saith of the whole Scripture, 2 Tim. iii. 16, I may justly



apply to this chapter, it is 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness:' for doctrine, in the great mystery of the gospel; for reproof of licentious Christians, for correction of arrogant justiciaries, and for instruction in righteousness, by teaching us to confess our sins and walk in the light.

I have nothing further to add, but only my prayers for you, and desire of your prayers for me: mine for

you, that this chapter, which is profitable in itself, may become so to you, by the mingling of faith and obedience with the reading, hearing, and meditating on it; yours for me, that I may, through God's providence continuing my health, and his Spirit's assistance enlightening my mind, be enabled to proceed in handling the subsequent chapters, so as may be to his glory, my comfort, and your profit. Amen.

### SERMON XIX.

*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.—1 JOHN II. 1, 2.*

WHAT a disease is in the body, that sin is in the soul; nor are *mali humores*, ill humours, more pernicious to the one, than *mali mores*, bad manners, are to the other; and indeed these are, as more, so far more dangerous than those,\* by how much the part affected is more noble. In this respect they who are appointed to watch over the people's souls are not unfitly called spiritual physicians; and as Luke, a physician of bodies, was one of the evangelists, so all the evangelists, apostles, and all ministers, are physicians of souls.

Upon this account we find this holy apostle, as in this whole epistle, so in these verses, performing the part of a careful and skilful physician; for whereas the whole body of physic is divided into two parts, namely, *προφυλακτική* and *θεραπευτική*, the one whereof is for preventing and the other for curing diseases, here we have this ghostly physician prescribing to his patients (whom he calls little children) in both these kinds, giving them a preservative to keep them from sin, and a restorative in case of falling into sin: 'My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin,' &c.

These two verses might very well have been annexed to the foregoing chapter, because the matter of them is pertinent to, yea, depends upon, that which immediately precedeth, as Marlorate† and Illyricus‡ have both truly observed; for whereas in the end of the former chapter the apostle insisteth upon three things,—remission of sins, as being the foundation of fellowship with God; confession of sin, as being the first step of walking in the light; and saying we have no sin, which, being opposite to confession, is a step of walking in darkness,—our apostle in these verses doth but further amplify, explain, and confirm these several parts, letting us know that the confession of sin he speaketh

of is such as puts on not sinning; and yet we cannot so not sin as to say we have no sin, and that the comfort of our remission dependeth upon Christ's advocacy and propitiation.

In the words we have two generals considerable, namely,

A caveat entered, which requireth care against sin, in those words, 'My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not;'

A comfort annexed, which discovereth the cure of sin in the following words, 'And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but the sins of the whole world.'

In the caveat we have observable,

A friendly compellation: 'My little children;'

A faithful admonition: 'These things I write to you, that you sin not.'

In the comfort we have considerable,

A disease or danger supposed: 'If any man sin;'

A remedy or succour proposed: 'We have an advocate,' &c.; 'And he is the propitiation for our sins,' &c.

At this time only of the first general; and therein begin we with the

*Friendly compellation*, 'My little children.' These three words in the English are but two in the Greek, and accordingly we may observe a word of

*Declaration*, *who they were*: *little children*;

*Appropriation*, *whose they were*: *My little children*.

1. He calls them *little children*, and that not once, but often, very often in this epistle; and here, yea, not only here, but in the most places he so styleth them upon a double ground.

(1.) Because, though not in a carnal, yet spiritual way, they were little children. What the proverb saith of old men is true of all good men, they are twice children, by generation and regeneration; as when they first partake of the human, so when they participate divine nature, they become little children.

(2.) Because, being regenerate, they were to be as

\* *Morbi perniciosiores pluresque sunt animi quam corporis.—Cic. 3 Tusc.*

† *Pertinet capitis hujus initium ad finem superioris.—Mavor. in loc.*

‡ *Vide Illyr. ibid.*

children. Our blessed Saviour puts these two together: Mat. xviii. 3, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children,' intimating that all converted persons become such; and St Peter, 1 Peter i. 23, ii. 2, calleth upon those who were born again to be 'as new born babes.' Indeed, in little children are the shadows of many graces and virtues which are really found in the regenerate.\* Little children cry after the dug,† an image of spiritual thirst after the word; are solicitous for nothing, a lesson of dependence upon divine providence; are content with a little, a document of temperance; lie upon the ground, a shadow of humility; give willingly of their meat to their playfellows, a representation of liberality; have no fraud nor deceit in them, an emblem of sincerity; bear no malice, are soon pacified, a dictate of placability and charity; are harmless and inoffensive, a monitor of innocency. It were easy to multiply parallels in this kind; and truly, inasmuch as children put us in mind of these duties, and thereby of avoiding the contrary sins of pride, covetousness, injuriousness, guile, malice, wrath, disobedience, contempt of God's word, hypocrisy, and all uncharitableness, our apostle here, intending to dissuade from sin in general, which includeth all these particulars, fitly bespeaks them in this phrase, little children.

2. It is further observable that he calleth them *my* little children, and this both in respect of a real (though spiritual) relation, and also by way of a metaphorical yet apt allusion.

(1.) *My little children*, in real relation, God having no doubt made him an instrument of converting many of them to, and strengthening all of them in, the faith. This spiritual affinity have all true Christians to their ministers. Indeed, primarily they are God's children, being (as the phrase is frequent in this epistle) 'born of God.' In this respect it is that St James saith, 'Of his own good will begat he us;' and St Peter blesseth the 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' for 'begetting us again.' And thus indeed ministers as well as people (if believers) are God's children. But still, secondarily, the people are the minister's children, for whereas God is the principal, they are the instrumental causes of forming Christ in the hearts of their auditory; and as the instruments of their natural being do, so no less justly the instruments of our spiritual being may, call us their children.

To clear this a little further, you may please to consider that the word of truth is the means whereby we are begotten to a spiritual, and nourished to eternal life; in which respect St Peter compareth it both to seed and to milk, 1 Peter i. 23, ii. 2, the seed by which we are born again, and the milk by which, being born, we are fed.‡ Now the preaching of this word is

\* *Amat Deus infantiam, humilitatis magistram, innocentie regulam, &c* — *Leo*.

† *Vide Hilar. in Matth.*

‡ *Vide Cl. Al. pædag. l. i. c. 6.*

committed to the ministers of Christ, and they are sent and appointed by God for this end, to publish the doctrine of salvation to men. No wonder if St Paul, writing to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iv. 15, resembleth himself to a father, and tells them, 'I have begotten you in Christ Jesus through the gospel;' to the Galatians, chap. iv. 19, compareth himself to the mother, and using this phrase of the text, 'my little children,' giveth this as the reason, 'of whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you;' and to the Thesalonians, 1 Thes. ii. 7, likeneth himself to a 'nurse that cherisheth her children.' Thus ministers are fathers and mothers to those who are converted, and so, as it were, begotten and brought forth; and nurses to them who are confirmed, and so, as it were, educated and brought up by their labours. Upon this ground it was that Paulinus, writing to Delphinus,\* by whom he was baptized and instituted in Christian doctrine, saith to him, *Tu nobis à Domino, et in Domino pater factus*, You are, under and in God, a father to me.

And (O beloved) that every soul in this congregation might be able to say of me, *My father*; oh that I might be able to say of you, *My children*. Why, tell me why, do you enforce us to complain with the prophet, Isa. xlix. 2, 'We labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought?' When, oh when, will you, by receiving this celestial seed, make us joyful fathers and mothers? Surely what Abraham in another case said to God, Gen. xv. 2, 'What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?' that we say to you in this, what will you give us? Reverence, maintenance. Ay, but all this is nothing if we go childless. Our desire is (like that of the king of Sodom to Abraham, Gen. xiv. 21), give us your souls, that we may give them to God; and as Isaiah prophesieth concerning the Messiah, chap. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied;' so this is our prayer to God, and desire of you, that we may see the travail of our souls in the conversion of yours; then, and not till then, shall we be satisfied. Oh that you would do us this honour, afford us this comfort, by your spiritual birth, and growth under our ministry, that we may be able upon this real ground to call you, as here St John did those to whom he wrote, 'My little children.'

But further, we may conceive our apostle using this appellation by way of allusion, thereby to teach them,

Implicitly, how they ought to look upon him, to wit, as a *father*;

Explicitly, how he did look upon them, as *his children*.

1. By calling them his children, he teacheth them to look upon him as their father, and not only in respect of his age (for so old men are styled by the younger), but his office (for so superiors are called by inferiors), and accordingly behave themselves as children. In his second and third epistles, he giveth himself the

\* Paulin. ep. 15.



title of an elder; being an elder he was a ruler, and therefore to be owned as their father. Naaman being a ruler in Syria, is called by his servants, 2 Kings v. 13, 'My father.' Elijah being a prophet in Israel, is called by Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 12, 'My father.' Micah said to the Levite, Judges xvii. 10, 'Thou shalt be a father and a priest to me.' And surely St John, being an elder, nay, more than so, an apostle, ought to be accounted by them as their father. Thus, *Tacite dignitatem suam indicat*, saith one\* upon these words. Here is a tacit insinuation of his dignity, and the authority he had over them, whereby they might be minded of their duty, and that both towards him and his writings.

(1.) Towards him, a duty of reverence. *Filio semper honesta et sancta persona patris videri debet*, saith the civil law: the person of the father ought to be venerable in the son's eye. When Alexander was asked why he did so highly respect Antipater, answered, because he was *ἀντί πατρός* instead of a father to him. Upon this account it is that ministers may expect, and the people ought to give them, a filial respect. It is God's argument, Mal. i. 6, to the priests that despise his name: 'A son honoureth his father: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? saith the Lord of hosts.' It may be the priests' argument to the people that despise their persons, If we be your fathers, where is our honour?

(2.) Towards his writings, a duty of obedience: 'Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father,' saith Solomon, Prov. iv. 1. Indeed, whose instruction should children hear, if not their father's? So that our apostle in calling them his children, intimateth what an obligation lay upon them of conformity to his writings, and following those counsels which were thereby given to them.

2. But lastly, by calling them his little children, he expresseth how he looketh upon them, to wit, with most endeared affections.

(1.) He declareth his love and care of them, in that he calleth them his children. He letteth them see that it was no less than a paternal and maternal love which he did bear to them. *Father*, saith Tertullian,† is not only *appellatio potestatis*, but *pietatis*, a word of power, but of love; *πάν φιλόστενον γένος*, said the poet,‡ all living creatures love their young ones. Love many times doth not ascend from children to parents, but it usually descends from parents to children. Such an affection had St John to those to whom he wrote.

(2.) And yet further, he sets forth the dearness of his love, in that he calleth them his little children. It was the language of his loving Master to his disciples, John xiii. 33; and he learned it of him, as being full of sweetness. Indeed, sometimes diminutives are words of contempt and scorn, but sometimes of tender respect; and no doubt this was the reason of our

apostle's using this diminutive, not out of a supercilious contempt, but an affectionate esteem of them.\* Clemens Alexandrinus hath observed, that all little things are most regarded and delighted in.† There is in us a kind of sympathy with, and care of, little things. It was Jacob's phrase to Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 13, that he must have regard to the tender children and young cattle in his journey. Besides, parents, though they love all, yet especially their little children.‡ Let the other shift for themselves, but their little ones they will be sure to take care of. 'Can a woman forget her sucking child?' is the question of God himself, Isa. xlii. 17. The sucking little babes are carried in the arms, dandled on the knee, fed at the breast; and though the mother may love her elder children as truly, yet not so tenderly. No wonder if interpreters conceive this expression as a word of greatest love,§ and manifesting his singular care of their good.||

Thus he who was the beloved disciple sheweth himself a loving pastor; and as he was dearly beloved of his Master, so his flock was dearly beloved of him. Nor was this only the temper of St John's spirit, but of the rest of the apostles, especially St Paul, who therefore tells the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xii. 15, how 'gladly he would spend and be spent for them;' calls God to record 'how earnestly he longed after the Philippians in the bowels of Jesus Christ,' Philip. i. 5. Indeed, to all to whom he wrote he still expresseth his entire affection. One of those titles which the holy apostles use in their epistles is *ἀγαπήτοι*, which the vulgar rendereth, and not unfitly, *carissimi*, and our translation *dearly beloved*. Nor are we to imagine this a verbal compliment, but a real expression; as they called them, so they accounted them, their dearly beloved. We read concerning Aaron, that he was to 'bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart,' Exod. xxviii. 29. So did those holy apostles in a mystical sense; nay, St Paul saith of the Corinthians, 2 Cor. iii. 2, that they were an 'epistle written in his heart.'

Let the same mind be in all ministers towards their people that was in St John and the other apostles. *Non minus vos diligo quos genui ex evangelio, quam si suscepissem conjugio*, said St Ambrose:¶ I love you no less whom I have begotten by the gospel, than if I had begotten them in matrimonial conjunction. *Pro officio sacerdotis omnes Christianos filiorum loco diligimus*, saith St Jerome:\*\* we love all Christians as our children. And this we do by reason of our office, which obligeth us to it; and if all, much more those

\* Non ex sui ipsius magnificatione, sed charitatis magnitudine.—*Carthus. in loc.* Vido Lorin. *ibid.*

† Clem. Alex. *Pedag.* lib. i. cap. v.

‡ Filii diliguntur, ad filii tenerē amantur.—*Tol. in Joh.*

§ Summi amoris.—*Gualt. in loc.*

|| Patenter indicat charitatem.—*Justin. ibid.*

¶ Ambros. *de Offic.* lib. i. cap. v. \*\* Hier. *Ep.* ix.

\* Justin. *in loc.*

† Tertul. *de Orat.* cap. ii.

‡ Eurip.

over whom divine providence hath placed us. And let our love shew itself to be a parental love, by the purity, vehemency, and activity of it; that as parents love their little children not for their own, but the children's sake, with a great measure of affection, not sparing any cost, pains for their good, so let us love our people; not theirs, but them; not coldly, but fervently; not lazily, but diligently; watching, fasting, praying, preaching, and every way endeavouring their spiritual good.

To end this first particular. It is not unworthy our observation and imitation, that this holy apostle being to press upon them a duty, first expresseth his affection; and the better to make way for his counsels, coucheth them as it were in sweet and pleasing language: \* *Verbis non duris, sed admodum blandis utitur, ut eo facilius persuadeat.* He useth not harsh and rough, but sweet and soft, words. He well knew that the sunbeams have a greater influence than the boisterous winds, and those whom severity hardeneth meekness softeneth. He well knew that if he could persuade the people of his love to them, he should the better gain their observance of his advice, since that cannot but be well taken which appeareth to be spoken in love. For this reason it is that this and other such compellations, as *brethren* and *beloved*, are frequently made use of by the apostle; yea, that we find them so often *entreating, beseeching, persuading*, that by their gentle expressions they might win upon those to whom they wrote. 'My doctrine,' said Moses, Deut. xxxii. 2, 'shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew,' to wit, in a mild and gentle manner. And indeed so it did; for, like a tender nurse, he sings to the froward child, reproving Israel's ingratitude in a song. Thus you see how, as God did once to Elijah, so the men of God to the people have for the most part come in the still voice. And surely it becometh well all God's ministers to write after these copies, and to endeavour that, by affectionate expressions and alluring phrases, they may prevail with those to whom they preach. Indeed, since we are messengers of the word of truth, we must abhor lying flattery; but withal, since we are ambassadors of the gospel of peace, we must use persuading lenity, and bespeak the people in the most loving, insinuating phrases, as here we see St John did, calling them 'my little children.' And let this suffice to have been spoken of the friendly compellation, which seemeth very fitly to make way for the

*Faithful admonition:* 'These things I write to you, that you sin not,' wherein there are two particulars further to be taken notice of.

The matter of the admonition in these words, 'that you sin not.'

The motive enforcing it, as the end of what he wrote in those words, 'these things I write unto you.'

1. Begin we with the matter of the admonition,

\* Vide Est. Fer. in loc.

which is not to sin. That I may the better illustrate what is the true and full meaning of these words, I shall entreat you to observe these ensuing particulars, and those, such as the comparing of this clause with the three last verses of the former chapter manifestly prompts to.

(1.) In the end of the preceding chapter our apostle tells those who say they have not sinned, that they make God a liar, by which it appears that this *sin not* is to be understood *de futuro*, in reference to time to come. As if he should say, Though you have sinned heretofore, yet sin not, that is, abstain from sin hereafter. And thus this admonition is the same with that of God by the prophet Isaiah, chap. i. 16, 'Cease to do evil;' by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xviii. 31, 'Cast away all your transgressions;' and of Christ to the impotent man whom he had healed, John v. 14, and to the woman which was charged with adultery, John viii. 11, 'Sin no more.' It was one of the prohibitions given to the Nazarites, that they should not drink vinegar, Num. vi. 3; but what need of this, whenas the sharpness of the liquor is enough to dissuade from drinking it? The literal reason whereof was no doubt because it came of the wine and strong drink; but Rabbanus maketh a moral application of it apt to our present purpose, where he saith, they drink vinegar who return to the oldness of their past sins, of which every spiritual Nazarite must beware.\* It is not unfitly observed to this purpose by Mendoza, concerning God's command of turning the rebels' censers into broad plates, which were fastened to the altar for a covering, Num. xvi. 37, that this might be one reason, that those censers might no more be employed in that sacrilegious way. For whereas had the censers remained, and not been beaten into plates, or if beaten and not fastened on the altar, they might have been easily again abused. Now they remained as memorials of their sins, and yet no way was left for misemploying them afterwards. And surely what should this but teach us how solicitous and careful we should be, though we have done iniquity, to do so no more; and though we have sinned, yet not to sin hereafter.

(2.) But further, in the ninth verse of the former chapter, he adviseth confession of sin, and here he addeth, 'sin not.' As if he would say, As you confess your sins past, so sin not for time to come. Indeed, this is both the truest and the safest, the most real and the most comfortable, part of repentaunce: 'Wash you, make you clean,' saith God by the prophet, Isa. i. 15; he washeth and is clean, saith St Austin,† *qui præterita plangit et iterum non admittit*, who bewaileth sin committed, and doth not commit sin bewailed. Our confessions, our prayers, our tears, our purposes,

\* Acetum bibunt, qui post vitæ sanctitatem in vetustatem præteritorum vitiorum labuntur, et corruptione veteris nequitie delectantur.—*Rab.*

† Aug. de Temp. Sermon. 66.



may be hypocritical; it is our actual forsaking of sin which evidenceth the truth of all the rest. True repentance doth not only decline the *accusative* case, by acknowledging sin, and the *vocative*, by calling upon God for pardon, but the *ablative*, by putting sin away; and thus, according to Origen's \* phrase, as it healeth those wounds that have been made, so it taketh care that the soul be not wounded again. Indeed, this is the great mistake of very many, they content themselves with a general confessing sin and formal asking of pardon, and still they add sin unto sin; but, alas! this is only  *fingere*, not *agere pœnitentiam*, to pretend, not practise penitence. *Optima pœnitentia vita nova*, the repentance of the life by dying to sin, is the very life of repentance.

(3.) Lastly, In the eighth verse of the former chapter, our apostle saith, 'If we,' in which number he includes himself, and consequently the holiest men, 'say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,' and yet here he writeth to them not to sin; two clauses which seem irreconcilable, but may be solved up by a double answer:

Either thus: 'sin not;' that is, endeavour that you may not sin at all hereafter. Though this cannot be the event, let it be your intent, the success; let it be your design in execution, let it be in intention. Sin not, saith Bede; that is, let us take heed how we add to the frailty of our flesh by our neglect, and therefore, let us strive to the utmost we can, that we may be free from all sin; and to this purpose is Calvin's gloss, when he saith by not sinning, he meaneth, that as far as human weakness will permit, we should abstain from all sin. †

Or thus: 'sin not;' that is, be sure you sin not *de futuro*, again, as you did *de preterito*, in the days of your unregeneracy. As if he would say, Though you cannot but sin still, yet sin not as you did before.

To enlarge this in a double reference.

[1.] *Quoad genus*, not in the same kind. Sin not; that is, beware of those gross sins, scarlet iniquities, in which before you lived. And thus, though it is possible a regenerate person may commit some great sin in which he formerly wallowed, yet it is not impossible for him wholly to avoid sins of that nature; nay, this is that which God expects and requireth of us, that though our garment will be spotted, yet it may not be rent in pieces; and though we cannot be without failings, yet that we should be without scandalous falls.

[2.] *Quoad modum*, not in the same manner as before you did, not with that fulness of deliberation, freeness of consent, strength of resolution, frequency of action, which you sinned with in times past. We cannot but sin, but we must not delight in, give up, accustom ourselves to the commission of sin. It was

\* *Pœnitentia non solum vulnus præteritum sanat, sed et ultra animam non sinit peccato vulnèrari.—Orig. hom. viii. in Num.*

† Vide Bed. Calv. in loc.

David's prayer, Ps. xix. 12, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sin,' and it is every good man's practice to keep himself, by God's grace, from sinning presumptuously. And this much shall serve to be spoken of the matter.

Proceed we now to the motive enforcing this admonition, and that is, because this was the end of his writing these things.

The prosecution of this lieth in the various reference of the *ταῦτα*, *these things* here spoken of. Indeed, we may very well understand it both in a *general* and a *particular* reference.

1. It may have a *general* respect to the whole epistle, and so we are to take notice of one principal end why he wrote this epistle, that he might take them off from their sins. And thus here is intimated both  *finis scribentis*, and  *finis scriptura*, the end of the writer, and the end of the writing: and that one and the same, their not sinning.

(1.) 'I write these things, that you sin not.' That was his aim and scope in his writing. Nor was it only his, but that which all the men of God in all their writings and preachings aimed at; and therefore you still find them harping upon that string, *repent*, and shooting their forked arrows at sin. Indeed, the false prophets, as God complaineth by Jeremiah, chap. xxiii. 14, did 'strengthen the hands of evil-doers;' but the true prophet's endeavour was to restrain them, the false prophet's, as Ezekiel's phrase is, chap. xiii. 18, did 'sew pillows under their arm-boles,' but the true plucked them away, 'Go up, and prosper,' was the voice of the lying prophets to Abab, 1 Kings xxii. 6. 'If thou return in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me,' saith Micaiah, ver. 28. Flattering ministers lull the people asleep, but faithful ones awaken them out of their sins. Oh let us herein approve ourselves sincere, by striking at, and labouring to beat down, sin in all our discourses.

(2.) 'These things I write unto you, that you sin not.' This was the end of all that he wrote.\* Nor is it only the end of his, but all the writings of the apostles and prophets; so that the whole Scripture is given us, among others, for this end, that we might not sin. If we look into holy writ, we shall find precepts, reproofs, threatenings, promises, histories; and *sin not* is that to which they all tend. The precepts are as clear glasses to discover sin; the reproofs, as faithful monitors to mind us of sin; the threats, as strong cords to bind us from sin; the promises, as gentle antidotes against sin; and the histories, as memorable monuments of the sad effects of sin. To this purpose it is that God's word is compared to a fire, Jer. xxiii. 29, which purgeth away the dross; to water, which cleanseth away the filth, Rev. xxii. 17; and to a sword with a double edge, Heb. iv. 12, the one whereof is to cut the heart of a sinner for sin, and the other to cut sin in the heart of a sinner.

\* *Tota doctrina huc spectat, &c.—Zanch. in loc.*

O my brethren, as these things are written by those sacred penmen, so let them be read, heard, pondered, and observed by us for this end, that we may not sin. These things are written in God's book that we may not, and if these things be written in our hearts we shall not, err. The psalmist proposeth it to young men, Ps. cxix. 9, and in them to all men, as an excellent help against sin: 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his ways? By taking heed thereto, according to his word.' And presently after, ver. 11, he sets down a *probatum est* from his own practice and experience, 'I have hid thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' When, therefore, we are to encounter with any sin, let us go to the book of holy writ, and thence choose out five smooth stones, a precept, a reproof, a threat, a promise, an history; put we them in the scrip of our hearts. Let us throw them with the sling of faith against the forehead of Goliath, our lust, whatsoever it be; so shall we be enabled to overcome, for 'these things are written that we sin not.'

2. Besides this general, there may be a more particular reference of this *ταῦτα*, *these things*, to the things which precede in the end of the former, and immediately follow in this chapter. For whereas he had in the foregoing verses delivered the doctrines of an impossibility of being without sin, of a possibility of pardon of sin, and that upon confession; and besides, he was presently to mention the comfortable doctrines of Christ's interceding to God for us, and reconciling us to God; well knowing how apt men are, and how ready they would be, to make these doctrines encouragements to sin,\* he thought it necessary that this caveat should be put after the one and set before the other, whereby the misconstruction and misapplication of these precious truths might be prevented; and, according to this reference, here is something implied, something expressed.

(1.) That these things which were written would be perverted by some, for the encouragement of themselves and others in sin.

(2.) That these very things which would be so perverted, were written by him that they should not sin.

(1.) Our apostle no doubt foresaw how these things which he wrote would be abused, and therefore thought this caveat very needful, for how apt are men to reason in this or the like manner: If we can never come to say we have no sin, what need we care though we have sin? That which no man can avoid, why should we go about to withstand? And thus, from a necessity, take to themselves a liberty of sinning again.

Again, If God will forgive sin upon confession, what need we fear the commission! If he is ready to forgive all sin, what need we care how many and great sins we run into? We can confess as oft as we offend, and God will forgive as oft as we confess. Once more,

\* Vide Fer. Naorg. in loc.

if Christ will be an advocate and propitiation when we have sinned, why should our sins trouble us! There is a plaster provided for our wounds, what need we fear to wound ourselves! And since Christ will free us from sin, let us sin freely.

Thus, as the best of actions, so of expressions, are subject to misconstructions, nothing can be done so exactly, nor written so exquisitely, but a wicked eye will pry, and censure, and slander. A vitiated stomach turneth all its meat into choler; a venomous spider sucketh poison out of the sweetest flower; and men of corrupt minds will strengthen themselves in sin, from pure and heavenly truth; as they make the good gifts of God conferred on them, so the good word of God published to them, fuel for their lust. St Peter saith of many 'unlearned and unstable souls,' that 'they wrest the Scriptures to their own perdition,' 2 Peter iii. 16, to wit, by making them patterns of error; no less do profane men by making them fautors of sin. And the metaphor there used is very emphatical, borrowed from the stretching of men upon the rack; and as those who are racked are oftentimes made to confess what they never did, so these cause the Scriptures as it were to speak what they never meant.

Oh let us take heed of learning this bellish sophistry; beware we of putting foul glosses upon the fair text. It is very ill to make a sinister construction of our neighbour's words, but far worse to misinterpret God's sayings; and we cannot more abuse these writings, than to make them speak anything which is either untrue or impure.

And because it is that to which men are so prone, oh let God's ministers take heed how they deliver things too largely and too loosely, without their due caution. It is Ferus his note,\* how wary St John is in delivering the sweetest doctrine of remission and reconciliation by Christ; no less is St Paul when he handleth the doctrine of justification. And so ought we, in delivering those sweet gospel verities, so to propose them, as that wicked men may not hereby take occasion to let loose the reins to all licentiousness.

(2.) But further to prevent this mistake, he plainly asserts that these very things were written by him that men might not sin. Those very doctrines which wicked men abuse to countenance looseness, directly tend to persuade strictness.

When the apostle saith we cannot be altogether without sin, what should that teach us but to be so much the more careful and watchful! Since we daily gather filth, we had need to take the more pains in cleansing ourselves. If I cannot shoot fully home, when I have done my best, I had need draw the arrow as far as I can, that I may come the nearer to the mark. Because my best knowledge is mixed with some ignorance, have I not reason to study hard that I may attain the more knowledge? Seeing do what

\* Vide Fer. in loc.



we can we shall slip, is there not cause of the more wariness that we may not fall, or at least not often? These things, 'if we say we have no sin,' 'if we say we have not sinned,' are written, 'that we sin not.'

Again, when the apostle saith, 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive; for what is this confession required but that we might not sin? The truth is, confession is required not so much in reference to sin past, either to inform God of, or make him amends for it, but chiefly in reference to sin for time to come, that hereby, being the more sensible of the offence, guilt, shame, and grief attending, we may be both enraged and engaged against it. He that by confession condemneth himself for his sin, is thereby obliged to condemn sin in himself; and the end of acknowledging our sins is, as that the sinner may be absolved, so that the sin may be executed.'

Once more, when the apostle saith, God forgiveth and cleanseth from all unrighteousness, and Christ is our advocate and propitiation for our sins, these are sweet yet strong arguments to dissuade from sin. Gospel-truths favour the sinner, but not the sin; they reach forth an hand of succour to us, but it is to pluck us out of the mire; they are a plaster, not to skin, but to heal the sores. Very apposite to this purpose is that of St Paul: Titus ii. 11, 12, 'The grace of God

which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.' Pardon and reconciling love cannot but (1.) oblige to thankfulness; and it were a very ill requital for pardoning an old to offer a new injury. (2.) Excite love, and love must needs make us careful not again to displease. No wonder if Arnobius\* saith, We who believe that our sins are expiated by Christ's blood, cannot but be cautious how we plunge ourselves into the guilt of sin again.

Oh let us study the purity of evangelical doctrines! Let us get spiritual enlightened understandings, that we may judge aright of these truths. 'Having these promises,' saith St Paul, 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'let us,' not defile, but 'cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' Then, and not till then, are gospel-verities rightly understood and believed, when we use them not only as cordials to revive our drooping spirits, but as purges to expel our corrupt humours. For 'these things I write to you,' saith our apostle here, 'that you sin not.'

\* Nos qui credimus sanguine filii Dei expiari peccata, non possumus non sollicitè à peccato nobis cavere.—*Arnob. adv. gent. lib. vii.*

## SERMON XX.

*And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*—1 JOHN II. 1.

**P**RESUMPTION and despair are two destructive rocks, upon either of which, if the ship of the soul dash, it is split in pieces; they are the two dangerous precipices, upon which whosoever steps saileth\* headlong into hell. Finally, these are the two deviating extremes from the golden mean, to which he that turneth must needs perish.

Indeed, one of these is the more common, to wit, that of presumption, in which respect (alluding to that expression of Saul and David, 1 Sam. xviii.) we may say, despair hath slain its thousand, but presumption its ten thousand; yet though the poison of the one be more spreading, the venom of the other is no less endangering; yea, both where they seize are deadly. Whilst presumption is an enemy to repentance, and despair to faith, that deceiveth with vain hopes of mercy, this tormenteth with hellish fears of justice; finally, the one hurrieth on the soul into sinful courses, and the other keepeth the soul back from laying hold on spiritual comforts.

Good reason why the Scriptures afford us antidotes against both these poisons; and here St John, like a skilful pilot, a wise guide, a faithful friend, warneth those to whom he wrote of both these rocks, advising them that they should neither go on presumptuously

\* Qu. 'falleth'?—Ed.

in their sins, nor yet mourn despairingly when they had sinned. 'My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate,' &c.

Having despatched the caveat, proceed we to the comfort, and therein begin with the,

1. Disease or danger supposed in those words, 'And if any man sin.' The right understanding of this clause depends much upon the genuine sense of the verb *sin*. To which end you may please to observe a threefold signification of it in Scripture.

(1.) To *sin*, is as much as to *live in sin*, and so respects the general course of a man's conversation. In this sense I conceive that of St Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 20, is to be understood. 'Them that sin' (that is, saith Calvin,\* *qui dissoluti vivunt*, who obstinately go on in sin), 'rebuke openly;' for those who sin, though grossly at first, are to be rebuked privately, and upon persisting openly. It is very observable to this purpose how the apostle useth those two phrases as synonymous, *continuing in sin* and *sinning*; for so he puts the question in the beginning of the sixth chapter, ver. 1, 'What then? shall we continue in sin?' and afterwards, in the same chapter, ver. 15, 'What then? shall we sin?'

\* Calv. *ibid.*

(2.) To *sin*, is as much as to *do some gross act of sin*, and so respects particular falls in the course of a man's life. In this sense Joseph maketh these two parallel phrases, 'doing great wickedness,' and 'sinning against God,' Gen. xxxix. 9. Thus when Job saith of his sins, chap. i. 5, 'It may be they have sinned;' and where it is said of Job, chap. ii. 20, 'in all this he sinned not;' and when the question is put concerning the blind man, 'Who sinned? this man or his parents?' is to be interpreted of some gross and heinous offence.

(3.) To *sin*, is as much as to *do any thing dissonant to that exact rule which the law of God sets before us*, and so refers to frailties and infirmities. In this sense (no doubt) is that assertion of the wise man to be construed, Eccles. vii. 20, 'There is no man that doeth good and sinneth not.' If you ask which of these is here meant, I answer,

1. The former of these acceptions is by no means here to be allowed. Christ is not, will not, be an advocate for them that continue in their sins. He saith himself expressly, 'I pray not for the world,' to wit, lying in wickedness, the world of unbelievers. Impenitent sinners have no interest in Christ's intercession, and indeed it is very observable to this purpose how our apostle phraseth this clause, so as that wilful sinners might have no hold of it. For, observe (1.) it is set down in conjunction with *sin not*, so much the particle *and* intimateth, implying that only those who make conscience of the caveat have a share in the comfort; 'and if any man sin,' to wit, who endeavoureth not to sin. (2.) It is set down with an *if*. He saith, not 'because we cannot but sin' (though this, as you shall hear presently, is his meaning), but 'if any man sin,' as if he would intimate that the sinning he speaketh of is not a resolute, but a casual sinning; 'if any man sin,' that is, if it happen that any man sin, to wit, besides his bent and course. (3.) It is not in the future tense, 'if any man *shall* sin,' lest that might be an encouragement to a man in future indulging to his sins; no, but in the second aorist, 'if any man *sin*,' being only intended to prevent despair in men when they have sinned; so that I must at the entrance of this paradise place a flaming sword to keep the tree of life, whereby presumptuous sinners may not gather the fruit which groweth upon it. The bread of this scripture is very nourishing, but it is not common; we must not sin as much as we please, as long as we list, and think to put it on Christ's score, to wallow in the mire, and expect his blood shall cleanse us; to renew our provocations, and still find him our propitiation; multiply our rebellions, and make use of him as an advocate to plead for us; no, let us not deceive ourselves, this *si quis* is not so large as to take in them that sin, that is, serve sin, and live in it.

2. The second of these acceptions may warrantably be admitted, as at least an orthodox sense of these words, and so the verb *sin* in the former clause and

this may be construed identically, or differently; either thus, 'I write these things that you sin not,' to wit, continue not in your sins; 'and if any man sin,' that is, having left, do fall into sin, and so the construction is diverse; or thus, 'I write these things that you sin not,' that is, take heed of gross sins; and if any man sin, that is, happen to commit some gross act of sin; and so the sense of the verb in both cases is the same. And according to this interpretation, here is manifestly implied a double possibility, the one of regenerate persons falling into gross sins, and the other of obtaining pardon for them.

(1.) According to this construction, the conditional particle *idv, if*, importeth a possibility for them who are converted to fall, and that into a gross sin. Indeed, there is no sin so small which a convert doth not abhor, and yet there is scarce any sin so great which he may not commit. It is true, on the one hand it is possible for him to live without, but on the other it is as well possible for him to fall into even a scandalous crime. Doubtless, what hath been may be; and when we find in Scripture eminent saints marked with notorious spots, we may justly conceive them incident to any as well as them. Whilst grace is defective, and temptations are strong, it is no wonder if sometimes corruptions get the mastery, and we not only step aside, but fall foully. Very needful in this respect are those counsels of St Paul: Gal. vi. 1. 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken with a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' *Ille hodie, ego cras*, was a devout saying of a good man; he is fallen to-day, and I may to-morrow; and, therefore, if thou standest whilst another falleth, thankfully acknowledge thy Father's goodness, but do not proudly disdain thy brother's weakness. Again, 1 Cor. x. 12, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' He is a wicked sinner who presumeth on God's mercy, and he is a proud saint who presumeth on his own strength. Whilst we are here, temptations will enter upon us, and we may enter into temptation. When we have acted a sin, we may fear too much, if it be such a fear as ends in horror and despair; but we cannot too much fear lest we should sin. Since, as the former is *flagellum*, a scourge of the bad, so the latter is *frnum*, a bridle to the good; nor is there a better preservative from, than the fear of, falling.

But further, it is well observed,\* that this expression, 'if any man sin,' is *elliptica oratio*, an elliptical speech, and there is somewhat implied which may be thus supplied: Let him not despair, or cast away all hope of pardon; and so we see there is a possibility of pardon for such sins. It is the erroneous opinion of the Novatians, that sins committed after baptism are unpardonable, and this chiefly grounded upon that of the author to the Hebrews, chap. vi. 3, 4, where he asserts it 'impossible for them who fall away' (after

\* Zanch. in loc.



enlightening and partaking of the Holy Ghost), 'to be renewed again by repentance.' In answer to which, though some interpret *ἀδυνατόν* to be no more than *χαλεπόν*, expounding *impossible* by *difficult*, yet I conceive we are to understand the falling away, not of a gross fall into a particular sin, but a malicious apostasy from the Christian religion, which 'crucifieth the Son of God afresh, and puts him to open shame,' as if he were an impostor and seducer, not the world's Redeemer; a sin which, being always joined with impenitency, rendereth renewing impossible for such persons. Notwithstanding which, there remaineth a possibility of pardon for particular sins, into which baptized and regenerate persons fall; in which respect repentance is fitly called by Tertullian,\* *secunda tabula post naufragium*, a second plank for them who, after they are bound for heaven, are shipwrecked by the storm of some violent temptation; and therefore, though gross falls are to be matter of deep humiliation, yet not of deadly desperation.

3. Lastly, the third, which is the most comprehensive acception and proper signification of the word, is by some, and not improbably, conceived to be the most genuine construction of it in this place. In this respect the conditional particle is as much as a causal, and *aliquis* equivalent to *omnis*; *if any*, that is, because *every man* sinneth. Indeed, it were to be desired that this supposition might never be a position; but understanding it of infirmities,† it not only may but will be so long as we live here. And therefore, as Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 46, having made an hypothesis, 'if they sin against thee,' presently addeth a parenthesis, and that by way of an epanorthosis ('and there is no man that sinneth not'), so it might here be in like manner annexed: 'If any man sin, as who is there that doth not sin?' this being, as hath been heretofore proved, incident to the best saints. Indeed, time was when there was a possibility of not sinning, to wit, in the state of innocence; time shall be when there shall be an impossibility of sinning, namely, in the state of glory; but in this present state of grace, there is both a possibility of sinning grossly, and a necessity of sinning in some degree.

These daily infirmities, though they cannot be avoided, yet must be bewailed; the burrs of corruption which cleave to us must prick us. These Canaanites, which we cannot expel, must be 'thorns in our eyes, and pricks in our sides.' With David, Ps. xix. 12, we must pray, 'Lord, cleanse me from secret sins;' with Paul, Rom. vii. 24, we must complain, 'O wretched man that I am!' but yet though they be our grief, they need not be our terror; matter of sorrow they ought to be, but not of despair, ever remembering that there is balm in Gilead, a remedy

appointed for these unavoidable diseases. And so I am fallen on the

Remedy proposed: 'We have an advocate,' &c.

Before we enter upon the particulars, something would be observed in general, and indeed it is well worthy our consideration, that the apostle, prescribing a remedy for our sins, sends us to Christ, as him in whom alone our comfort lieth. *Extra nos rapit nos*, saith Aretius,\* aptly; he taketh us from ourselves that he may fix us upon Christ. Indeed, he requireth, that if we sin we should confess our sins, but still we must have recourse to Christ as an advocate for us and a propitiation for our sins; he calls upon us before to walk in the light, but withhold minds us of the blood of Christ, as that which must cleanse us. None more for repentance and holiness of life than St John, yet still he would have us by faith rely on the efficacy of Christ's merits. The truth is, he that relieth on Christ buildeth upon a rock, but he that resteth on his own performances, buildeth upon the sand; and as on the one hand, we must not think to rest by faith on Christ and neglect our duty, so on the other, we must so perform our duty as still by faith to rest on Christ. The truth is, our own performances are so accompanied with defects, that they cannot afford full consolation. We confess, and pray, and repent, but, alas, these very duties need an advocate; so that, as Noah's dove found no rest for the sole of her foot till she came to the ark, no more can we find any heart's ease, soul's rest, till we come to Christ. And this be spoken in the general.

More particularly, we may observe two ingredients in this remedy, namely, Christ's intercession and reconciliation; the former in the end of the first, and the latter in this second verse.

The first ingredient is Christ's intercession; in those words, 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,' wherein there are two things observable,

I. The quality, what it is; 'we have an advocate.'

II. The efficacy, how prevalent it is in respect of,

1. The person with whom, 'the Father.'

2. The person who, 'Jesus Christ the righteous.'

I. The first thing to be discussed is the quality of this ingredient, and to that end we must inquire what this meaneth, that Christ is called an advocate.

The more clearly to unfold this comfortable truth, I shall proceed by these steps.

1. The Greek word *παράκλητος*, here used, is attributed in Scripture both to Christ and the Spirit,† but when it is attributed to the Spirit, it is rendered by *comforter*, when to Christ, by *advocate*; and not without reason, since the Spirit's work is to speak comfortably to us, and Christ's to plead powerfully for us. Indeed, whensoever this title is given to the Holy Ghost, it is either in respect of the world, and then it noteth his pleading for God with men by

\* Tertul. de Penit.

† Si quis fragilitate peccaverit.—Cajet. in loc. Si de infirmitate vita subreperit peccatum, &c.—Aug. in loc.

\* Aret. in loc.

† Aret. in loc.

way of conviction, John xvi. 7, 8; or in respect of believers, and then it noteth his encouraging them in all their distresses, chap. xiv. 19, and enabling them by strong groans to plead with God for themselves, Rom. viii. 28; but when it is given to Christ, it importeth his taking our cause upon himself, and undertaking to intercede with God in our behalf.

2. This will the better appear if we consider that *advocate* is *verbum forense*, a judicial word,\* so that look, as in all such proceedings, there is the guilty, the accuser, the court, the judge, and the advocate, so is it here: heaven is the court, man is the guilty, Satan the accuser, God is the judge, and Christ the advocate; and look as the advocate appeareth in the court before the judge, to plead for the guilty against the accuser, so doth Christ before God in heaven, to answer whatsoever the devil can object against us.

3. But further, as Christ is here called an *advocate*, so is he elsewhere a *judge*. Thus St Peter saith, Acts x. 42, that Christ commanded the apostles to preach, and testify that it is 'he whom God hath ordained to be judge of quick and dead.' Indeed, both these, in respect of different times and his several offices, are aptly verified of him.

(1.) Now being ascended to heaven, he is an *advocate*; at the last day, when he descends from heaven, he shall be a *judge*. How comfortable is this meditation to believers, that he who is now their advocate is hereafter to be their judge; and if he vouchsafe to plead for them at the bar, he shall certainly pass sentence for them upon the bench.

(2.) There is a twofold office which Christ undertaketh, in respect of which these are truly attributed to him: the one regal, and the other sacerdotal. As king, he shall one day sit as a judge; as priest, he now stands as an advocate at God's hand; † by his kingly power he shall execute the one, but of his priestly goodness he vouchsafeth the other. And thus, whilst as a king he can and will himself confer, yet as a priest he obtaineth of the Father, remission of our sins.

4. It is not unworthy our observation, that as Christ is here called by St John an advocate, so by St Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 5, a mediator. *Unus utriusque nominis sensus*, saith Gualter; the sense of both is one and the same, but yet there is some difference to be observed between them. Christ is a mediator both in respect of his person and his office, both because he is a middle person, and because he mediateth between God and man; ‡ whereas he is an advocate only in respect of his office; again, he is a mediator in respect of all his offices, an advocate only in respect of his sacerdotal; finally, a mediator, inasmuch as he doth both deal with God for man, and with man for God; pacifying God towards man, bringing man to God; obtain-

ing favour with God for us, and declaring God's will to us; but an advocate only, inasmuch as he intercedeth with God and pleadeth our cause in heaven. *Mediator* then is, as it were, the *genus*, and *advocate* the *species*, it being one part of his mediatorship that he is an advocate. I shall end this with Beza's distinction,\* who observeth that Christ is called a judge in respect of our adversaries, a mediator in reference to God, and an advocate in regard of us, judging our enemies, mediating with God, and pleading for us.

5. We may not unfitly here distinguish between a *patron* and an *advocate*, between a *defender* and an *interceder*; the one undertaketh to justify the fact, the other only to prevent the punishment of the fault. If any man sin, far be it from Christ to be a patron, to defend the fault, but he is an advocate to deprecate the guilt. † In the end of the verse he is called 'Jesus Christ the righteous,' and therefore, *non nisi justam causam suscipit*, ‡ he cannot maintain a bad cause; but though he abhors to plead for the sin, yet he will for the sinner, and though he dare not excuse the commission, yet he intercedes for the remission of the offence.

6. Lastly, when Christ is said as an advocate to intercede, we are not to fancy a supplicating voice and bended knees. No; it suiteth not with the majesty of Christ in heaven. But that which Christ doth as an advocate, is, according to the apostolical phrase, his 'appearing for us' in that celestial court, Heb. ix. 24, as an advocate doth for his client in human judicatories. To open this more fully, be pleased to know that the advocateship of Christ consists in a fourfold presentation.

(1.) Of his person, in both natures, divine and human, his and ours, as our sponsor and mediator. In this respect 'he liveth in heaven,' saith the apostle, Heb. vii. 21, 'to make intercession.' As he lived on earth to die, so he liveth in heaven to intercede for us, presenting himself as one that hath made satisfaction for our offences. Hence it is, that there is not only a presentation of himself, but

(2.) Of his merits. As the high priest entered into that holy of holies with the blood of the sacrifice, so is Christ entered with his own blood; and as there was once for all an oblation of it upon the cross, so there is a continual presentation of it in heaven. In this respect his blood is said to 'speak better things than Abel's,' Heb. xii. 24, for whereas Abel's blood did from the earth imprecate, Christ's in heaven deprecates, vengeance. Indeed, *quot vulnera, tot ora*, how many wounds, so many mouths to plead for sinners. Thus action is the best part of this orator, who intercedeth by shewing his wounds, his pierced hands and feet, his opened side, his bruised body. As a

\* *Morem et consuetudinem fori exprimit.*

† *Judex est Christus cum residet, advocatus cum assurgit.*—*Ambros.* in Ps. cxviii. oct 20. *Maxim.* in Pentecost, hom. i.

‡ *Isidor.* *Hiszsal.* orig. lib. iii. cap 2.

\* *Bez.* in loc.

† *Aug.* ep. 55.

‡ *Serrar.* in loc.

‡ *Non supplicium more.* *Calv. Est.*—*Vide Naz. Orat.* iv. do Theol.



mother entreating her son openeth her dugs and breasts, so this Son, interceding with his Father, presenteth his blood and his wounds.\* When Eschylus the tragedian was accused, his brother Amyntas coming into the court, opened his garments, shewed them *cubitus sine manu*, an arm without an hand lest in their service, by which he obtained his brother's discharge. So doth Christ for us, by shewing to the Father, as once he did to Thomas, his wounds and his side. In which respect Calvin saith well,† that Christ's intercession is nothing else but a perpetual application of his death, though yet withal we must conceive, that in Christ's advocateship, there is not only a presentation of his person and merits, but

(3.) Of his will and desire in our behalf. Christ interceding by the virtue of his blood, doth not beg in a precarious way, but yet he signifieth his will; and if you would know what his will is, I answer, it is that the pardon which his blood hath merited may be granted and assured to, that the spirit which his death hath purchased may be given for the strengthening of, that the salvation which by his sufferings he hath wrought may in due time be conferred on, all his members. Besides all which, this advocate makes a presentation,

(4.) Of our prayers and supplications which we make in behalf of ourselves and others, and the prayers of the church which she maketh in our behalf. *Preces sacrificii sui odore sanctificat*, saith Calvin, he perfumes our prayers with the odour of his sacrifice, and so presents them to his Father. In this respect he is as it were the master of requests, and the angel (in the Revelation, chap. viii. 3) with the golden censer, and we are said to have 'boldness of access through him,' Eph. iii. 12; and he assured his disciples, Jehn xvi. 23, that 'whatsoever they did ask in his name, should be given them.'

I end this first part. Lapidè observeth, that an advocate appearing in the behalf of guilty persons, is to do three things: to allege what may satisfy the law, and yet the guilty persons escape; to present the humble confessions and entreaties of the nocent; and, withal, to interpose his own desires and requests to the judge in the delinquent's behalf. In all these considerations Christ is our advocate, as you have already heard; he, as it were, allegeth his sufferings as a satisfaction of the law for our sins; he tenders our penitent acknowledgments and prayers for pardon to the Judge; yea, he declareth it to be his own no less earnest than just desire, that for his sake our sins should be forgiven us. And now, that you may see he is, according to Tertullian's phrase,‡ *orator*, a prevailing orator, be pleased to take a view of,

II. The efficacy of this intercession, and that in respect,

1. Of the person with whom he is an advocate, the Father. To unfold this, know,

(1.) First, That the Father is properly the name of the first person in the sacred Trinity; and accordingly with Carthusian,\* we are so here to understand it, though not excluding the other persons. Indeed, all the three persons being offended when any sin is committed, Christ is virtually an advocate with them all; but yet, as he cannot be said properly to intercede with himself, and lest he might be thought inferior to the Spirit if an advocate with him, therefore his intercession is set forth as expressly directed to the Father. And inasmuch as the other persons have the same essence, and therefore will with the Father, Christ, in being an advocate with him, is also with them.

(2.) But further, the Father relateth to the Son, whence the Arians argue, that as the advocate is inferior to the judge, so the Son is to the Father; when as yet St Paul saith, Philip. ii. 6, he 'thought it no robbery to be equal with God;' that is, the Father. In answer to which,

[1.] It may, and that orthodoxly, be returned by way of concession, that the Son is inferior to the Father, with this restriction *as Son*, and the Father *as Father*. Look as though the essence be the same, yet the persons are really distinct one from the other; so I know no reason but that we may assert, though the persons have an equality, because an identity, of essence, yet as persons they are inferior one to the other. This solution St Basil maketh use of to clear those words, 'My Father is greater than I,' whilst yet he was equal with his Father. Nor is it any infringement to the truth, nor encouragement to the Arian heresy, to assert, that whereas the Son of God, *as God*, is equal with, yet *as Son* he is inferior to, the Father.

[2.] But, letting this go, you may please to take notice, that the Son of God is advocate with the Father as mediator; and he is mediator, not as God, nor as man, but as God-man; upon which consideration he may be truly asserted inferior to the Father. Hence the Son of God his becoming man, is called an 'emptying himself' (for so St Paul's phrase signifieth), whereby he that is equal with, became in our nature subordinate to, and so capable of being advocate with, the Father.

[3.] Lastly, *The Father* is a comprehensive expression, and may have reference both to the advocate and the guilty, and so either *his Father* or *our Father*. Indeed, God is the Father of Christ, and the Father all believing penitents, in a very different respect; whilst he is Christ's Father by generation, ours only by regeneration; Christ's by natural begetting, ours by gracious adopting; Christ's primarily, ours mediately, in and through him; and therefore our Saviour saith not, 'I go to *our*,' but to '*mine and your Father*,'

\* Carthus. in loc.

\* Vide Greg. lib. vi. ep. 25; Ambros. in Ps. cxviii. oct. 20; Aug. in Ps. xxv. † Calv. in loc.

‡ Tertul. de Pudicit. lib. ii. cap. 19.

because he is otherwise Christ's than ours; but yet he is ours as well as Christ's. And these words, *the Father*, may well take in both, as having a strong influence into the efficacy of the intercession.\*

*With the*, that is, Christ's, *Father*. The advocate is the Judge's Son; and therefore the Father is *illius amantissimus*, dearly affected towards him, and cannot but grant his desire. Surely he that saith to us, Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my well beloved Son, hear him,' will himself hear him upon that very account. As the sufficiency of Christ's death depends upon his God-head, so the validity of his intercession upon his Sonship. When God saith concerning Christ, 'Thou art my Son,' there presently followeth an 'Ask of me, and I will give thee,' Ps. ii. 10. 'I and my Father,' saith Christ, 'are one;' so that God can as well deny himself as his Son. Add to this,

*With the*, that is, our, *Father*. The guilty are the Judge's children, and therefore the Father is *erga nos clementissimus*, most indulgent towards us, and in this respect the advocate likely to speed. Great is the love of parents, even towards their offending children; witness that of David to Absalom, especially when they return; witness that of the father to the prodigal. *Pro maximo delicto paululum supplicii satis est patri*, a few stripes will serve with a father for a great offence; nay, any intercession will prevail with a father to withhold his correction.† Yea, how often will a father desire another to step in and intercede for his child. 'I say not,' saith Christ to his disciples, John xvi. 27, 'that I will pray the Father for you, the Father himself loveth you,' as if there were scarce any need of this mediation; however, no doubt but that this being the pleasure of the Lord, it shall prosper in his hand, and God's heart being prepared, Christ's suit must needs be granted. To shut up this first consideration: Jacob, the younger brother, obtained the blessing from his father in the garments of Esau, the elder; Christ, the elder, obtaineth the blessing at the Father's hands for his younger brethren. No wonder if the brother pleading for brethren, and that with the Father, become an effectual advocate, and so much the rather, considering,

2. The person, who it is, and how fitly he is qualified to this office, being 'Jesus Christ the righteous.' This word *righteous* is capable of various acceptations, which, accordingly, interpreters make use of.

(1.) *Righteous* is sometimes as much as *merciful*, and thus 'Jesus Christ the righteous,' that is, gracious, and therefore ready to become an advocate for us. To this purpose it is that the author to the Hebrews, chap. ii. 17, † calls him a 'merciful high priest,' one who, having compassion on us and our infirmities, is willing to plead our cause before God.

(2.) *Righteous* is sometimes as much as *faithful*, §

and so 'Jesus Christ the righteous'; that is, in performing his promise when he was on earth. He promised his disciples, 'I will pray the Father,' and now he is in heaven to perform it.

(3.) *Righteous* is as much as *just*,\* and so 'Jesus Christ the righteous;' that is, in doing us right. If we retain him for our advocate, he will not be withdrawn from pleading our cause by any means whatever.

(4.) But, lastly, *righteous* is as much *holy, innocent*.† So we find them joined together concerning Christ, whom the apostle Peter, Acts iii. 24, calls 'the holy and just one;' and so 'Jesus Christ the righteous' is as much as *pure and innocent*; and this both in respect of himself and us.

1. In himself he is righteous, because blameless; one who is altogether free from sin. It is well observed by the learned Chamier, ‡ that the apostle saith not, 'We have a righteous advocate, Jesus Christ,' but 'we have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous.' And therefore this term righteous signifieth not so much *rationem fungendi officii*, as *ipsius officii fundamentum*, the manner of performing this office as a qualification rendering him fit to undertake it, and so is most properly referred to his innocency, since he could not have been an advocate if he had not been in this sense righteous. In this respect it is that Ferus§ saith truly, *Verè necessaria conditio*. This is a condition necessarily requisite, since if he had had any sin of his own to answer for, he could not have pleaded for us. *Neque enim idoneus advocatus qui ipse sit reus*, as Estius saith excellently, he can be no fit advocate for another who himself is guilty. But yet this is not all, he is Jesus Christ the righteous or innocent, not only in himself, but also,

2. In respect of us, inasmuch as he maketh us righteous, cleansing us from the guilt of our sins. To this purpose, saith Illyriens, he is called *the righteous*, not so much in a passivo as in an active sense; and Cajetan, observing the following words, 'he is the propitiation,' saith, *Ecce justitia Jesu Christi*, herein is the righteousness of Jesus Christ our advocate, that he maketh us by his propitiation righteous, and so is enabled to plead our cause. To this effect it is that Lorinus observeth, He is such an advocate as satisfieth the judge not only by reason, but reality, interceding by virtue of a price paid. And hence it is that, though he findeth both us and our cause unjust, yet (which no other advocate can do) he maketh both us and it righteous, so that though we by reason of our sins are unworthy of pardon, yet Christ, pleading his satisfaction, rendereth us worthy and our cause just. And no wonder if, being thus every way righteous, he become an effectual advocate. And thus much shall suffice for the explication of this choice ingredient in this divine remedy, 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'

\* Vide Ambros. de Virginit.; Ang. in Johan.

† Terrent. adv.

§ Socin.

‡ Mestrez. in loc.

\* Hug. ibid. † Calv. ‡ Cham. de Satisf. l. xxiii. c. xii.

§ Vide Fer. Est. in loc.



To end it in a brief application, and that by way of, 1. Consolation. The Greek word here used (as Vorstius\* well observeth) may be rendered either *advocate* or *comforter*, since, inasmuch as Christ is an advocate, he is a comforter to all penitent sinners. If you please, read over the text again, and take the words asunder, and you shall find that every word breatheth comfort.

*We.* It is not *you*, but *we*. St John includeth himself in the number of those sinners† who need Christ an advocate, and therefore we may be the less discouraged in the sense of our infirmities. And again, it is not *I*, but *we*; he excludeth not others from having an interest with himself in Christ the advocate. And therefore every penitent may apply this comfort to himself, which is so much the more comfortable because it is *we*.

*Have.* It is not *we may*, but *we have*. A burdened conscience cannot be satisfied with a *perhaps*, nor will it hang upon uncertainties. This comfort of Christ's intercession is certain, and therefore positively asserted. Nor is it spoken of as a thing past, but present, not *we had*, but *we have*; and indeed, it is so in the present tense, that we now may as truly say we have. As St John then, yea, so long as there shall be penitents on earth, there will not want this advocate in heaven. So true is that of the author to the Hebrews, chap. vii. 21, 'He ever liveth to make intercession;' that is, to be

*An advocate.* It is true we want not accusers that will be ready to lay our sins to our charge, Satan without, and our own consciences within, ready to bring an indictment against us; nor have we any merit of our own to plead before God for us; but 'we have an advocate' to stand and appear for us, and that

*With.* Many times a cause miscarrieth in human courts by reason of the advocate's absence, but of this there is no fear in our advocate; for he is at the Judge's right hand, and so still ready upon all occasions, as it were, to put in a word for us to the

*Father.* Not the *Judge*, but the *Father*, to render our hope of prevailing so much the more firm; this sweet word of *Father*‡ implying not only a possibility, but a facility of obtaining; so much the rather, considering that it is

*The Father*, and so capable of a reference both to Christ and us. He that is our advocate is not a servant, a friend, but a Son, § and so the Judge's chiefest favourite. We for whom he is an advocate are not slaves, or strangers, or enemies, or only servants, but sons, though too deficient in our obedience. And

\* Perinde est sive advocatus, sive consolator.—Vorst. in loc.

† Maluit se in numero ponere peccatorum, &c.—Aug. in loc.

‡ Vox dulcissima patris facilitatem indicat.—Fer.

§ Vide Bellarm. de ascens. dom. conc. xxxv.

can we imagine that the suit should not speed? Nay, further, this advocate whom we have with the Father is

*Jesus*, that signifieth a Saviour; and he that vouchsafeth to be our Saviour will not stick to be our advocate; yea, that he may 'save,' as the apostle's phrase is, 'to the utmost,' Heb. vii. 23, he will leave no way unattempted; as by his passion, so by his intercession; by the one purchasing salvation for, by the other applying it to, us. Nor need we doubt that he will be thus every way a *Jesus* to us, when we observe that he is the

*Christ*, a word that signifieth *anointed*. And indeed so he was to all his offices, among the rest to that of his priesthood, and so this part of it which consists in intercession. Anointing carrieth in it both designation to, and preparation for, an office, all that were anointed being thereby called to, and furnished with abilities for, the office to which they were anointed. Our advocate, therefore, being Christ, is both a legal and skilful advocate, called to the bar, invested with gifts, and therefore knoweth how to plead. And that our joy may be full, take in the last words.

*Righteous*, and therefore he will not deceive us in our trust, or fail our expectation. Though an advocate be able and knowing, yet if he be not just, our cause may miscarry; but this advocate is so righteous that he cannot be perverted; nay, he is righteous, and therefore can stand in God's sight to plead for us; whereas were he himself nocent, he must flee from the face of the Judge, and being unable to answer for himself, could not undertake our cause. Once more, this advocate is Jesus Christ,

*The righteous*, because so exactly, perfectly, without the least spot. We know how far the intercession of Abraham, Moses, and other righteous men have prevailed; yea, St James saith, chap. v. 16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' and that not only for himself but others; and surely then much more must the intercession of him who is *the righteous one* be effectual. Yea, perhaps (as Origen\* observes), therefore Moses obtained so much of God in Israel's behalf, that we might not be faithless, but confident in our advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous.

And now, O thou drooping sinner, let me bespeak thee in St Austin's‡ language: Thou committest thy cause to an eloquent lawyer, and art safe; how canst thou miscarry, when thou hast the Word to be thy advocate? Let me put this question to thee: If, when thou sinnest, thou hadst all the angels, saints, confessors, martyrs, in those celestial mansions to beg thy pardon, dost thou think they would not speed? I tell thee, one word out of Christ's mouth is more worth than all their conjoined entreaties. When, therefore, thy daily infirmities discourage thee, or particular falls affright thee, imagine with thyself that thou heardest thy advocate pleading for thee in these

\* Orig. Hom. viii. in Num.

‡ Aug. in loc.

or the like expressions : O my loving and affectionate Father, look upon the face of thine Anointed ; behold the hands, and feet, and side of thy crucified Christ ! I had no sins of my own for which I thus suffered ; no, it was for the sins of this penitent wretch, who in my name sueth for pardon ! Father, I am thy Son, the Son of thy love, thy bosom, who plead with thee ; it is for thy child, thy returning penitent child, I plead. That for which I pray is no more than what I paid for ; I have merited pardon for all that come to me ! Oh let those merits be imputed, and that pardon granted to this poor sinner ! Cheer up, then, thou disconsolate soul, Christ is an advocate for thee, and therefore do not despair, but believe ; and believing, rejoice ; and rejoicing, triumph ; and triumphing, take up that bold challenge of St Paul, Rom. viii. 33, 34, ' Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth ; who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'

## 2. Counsel, and that in several particulars.

1. Since we are so well provided, seek we not elsewhere. It is not unftly observed to this purpose, that St John saith not we have *advocates*, in the plural number, but *an advocate*, in the singular,\* this being Christ's peculiar prerogative. Indeed, the papists have coined a distinction between *mediator redemptionis* and *intercessionis*, a mediator of redemption and intercession, appropriating the former to Christ, attributing the latter to the Virgin Mary and the rest of the glorified saints. But the advocateship and the propitiation are here by our apostle joined together ; and accordingly our church, in the close of one of the Collects, putting *mediator* and *advocate* together, prefixeth an exclusive particle to both, ' through our only mediator and advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord.' I deny not but that the saints in heaven pray for the church on earth ; but though they pray for her in general, yet not for her particular members, whose sins and wants they are strangers to, and therefore cannot pray for. And that they pray for the church, it is *ex charitate ut fratres, non ex officio ut mediatores*, by way of charity, not authority ; as friends, not as advocates.

And whereas it is another subterfuge of the Romanists, that, though Christ be our only mediator with the Father, yet we may make use of the mother and the rest to be our advocates to Christ ; besides that, in their prayers they expressly desire the saints to pray to God for them, even in respect of Christ, it is both vain and impious : vain, because, it being his work to reconcile us to God, there is no need of any to reconcile us to him ; and, though an advocate be needful to the

\* Zach. in loc.

judge, yet what need of an advocate to the advocate ; nay, indeed, when Christ bids us come to him, to wit, ourselves, what an impious contempt were it of his command to go to him by a proxy.

It may perhaps be here objected, if we may not desire the prayers of the saints in heaven, why do we of those on earth ? How is it that St Paul calleth upon the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. v. 24, to pray for him ? and St Cyprian, in an epistle\* to the Roman confessors, craveth their remembrance of him in their prayers ? And nothing more usual with Christians than thus, both by word and writing, to beg one another's prayers. But, beloved, this we desire of one another, not as advocates, but only as fellow-helpers ; and hence it is, that whilst as members we pray each for other, we all in our prayers acknowledge Christ to be him who doth and must entreat for us all. In sum ; there is a great deal of difference between a Christian desiring of their prayers, who know our persons, to whom we may signify our wants, and a religious invocation upon them for their prayers, who are both ignorant of us and our necessities.† Let, then, the apostatized Rome seek to angels and saints ; we will only make mention in our prayers of the name of Jesus Christ, as him on whose intercession we depend and rest.

2. Since he is an advocate for us with the Father, let us be advocates for him with the world ; let us plead his cause, vindicate his honour, speak for his gospel, intercede for his members. It is but that to which gratitude obligeth, to do for him (as far as we may) what he doth for us, and so return like for like. Indeed, he can and will plead his own cause ; nor doth he stand in need of our help, but he taketh it kindly when we express our thankfulness by becoming advocates for him.

3. That, when we sin, Christ may be our advocate, let us be sure to arraign and accuse ourselves ; it is St Austin's advice.‡ Continually censure and condemn thyself ; so mayest thou come boldly in confidence of thine advocate. Indeed, I may here fitly make use of those words towards the end of the former chapter, ' If we confess our sins,' he is our advocate to plead for pardon. In one word, let us with penitent hearts on all occasions go to him, and humbly entreat him that he would entreat for us. He desireth no more than to be desired ; prayer is the only fee this advocate expects. Let us, therefore, confess, and confessing pray, to the Father in his name, yea, to himself, that he would pray to the Father, and let us not doubt but he will perform what we desire and obtain what we expect, the forgiveness of our sins ; and not only so, but in the end, that which is ' the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.'

\* Cypr ep. xvi. † Vide Aug. in loc. ‡ Id. ibid.



## SERMON XXI.

*And he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.—*  
1 JOHN II. 2.

IT is one of those excellencies which are common both to law and gospel, that they require purity of heart and holiness of life. 'Sin not,' is the voice both of Moses and Christ, prophets and apostles. Indeed, since they were holy men who wrote, and that as moved by the Holy Ghost, it was impossible but that all their writings should tend to the advancing of holiness.

It is one of those excellencies which are peculiar to the gospel, that it provideth an anchor in case of a storm, a rock of succour in shipwreck, a refuge whither to fly when we are in danger. Indeed, the law doometh the transgressor to the curse, and there leaveth him hopeless, helpless, remediless: Gal. iii. 10, 'Accursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' So runs the comminatory sentence, in which the sinner being involved, hath no way left (by the law) of escaping, but must inevitably perish; whence it is that the legal ministration is called by the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 7, the 'ministration of death.' But by the gospel cometh glad tidings of pardon and propitiation to disconsolate sinners; and whilst we are sitting in the darkness of despair, by reason of our sin, breaketh in upon us with beams of comfort from the Sun of righteousness. Thus, as it saith, *Sin not*, so withal, if we fall into sin, it saith, *Despair not*. A careful endeavour against sin it requireth; yet when we have sinned, it leaveth us not without hope, but directeth us to Christ as an intercessor and reconciler. For so we find St John here in those words, which may therefore be truly called the epitome and sum of the gospel, 'My little children, these things I write unto you,' &c. We are now come to the second ingredient in this remedy, to wit, the reconciliation wrought by Christ, and this in the second verse, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world;' concerning which choice and amiable benefit, we have two things set before us:

The nature of it, wherein it consists, in those words, '*and he is the propitiation for our sins.*'

The extent of it, how far it reacheth, in those words, '*and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world;*' each of which may well take up an whole discourse.

At this time only of the former, expressed in those words, 'and he is the propitiation for our sins.'

Before I enter upon the matter, it will be needful to take a little notice of the connection of the clause, implied in the particle *and*, a word which may be considered either merely as conjunctive, or as causal.

1. If we read it only as a conjunctive particle, it lets us see that Christ, being an advocate, becometh a propitiation. Indeed, the work of reconciliation, according to a different notion, belongs both to Christ's sacrifice and his intercession. The meritorious purchase of our peace belongs to his sacrifice, the effectual application of it to us belongs to his intercession. The shedding of his blood upon the cross was that which wrought reconciliation for all that should believe in him, the presenting his blood in heaven is that which obtaineth the actual collation of this benefit upon them who do believe in him. This was excellently typified under the law by the blood and the incense which the priest made use of in the atonement, Lev. xvi., xvii., the former prefiguring Christ's suffering, and the latter his advocateship, by both which the propitiation is made. It is that which we have reason to take notice of for our comfort, that Christ is such an advocate as hath not only *affectum*, but *effectum*, a desire to do us good, but accomplisheth it, as doth not only *satagere*, but *efficere*, undertake, but perform. As he intercedeth for us when we sin, so he finds acceptance, and he propitiateth God for our sins. Oh, let it be our wisdom to address ourselves to him as our advocate when we have offended, and let us not doubt of being reconciled.

2. We may yet further look upon this *and* as a causal particle, signifying, after the Hebrew use, *for*, and so it lets us see what giveth the efficacy to Christ's intercession, to wit, his propitiation. This will the better appear, if we consider that,

1. This propitiation for our sins was merited by Christ's blood, and therefore, Rom. iii. 25, God is said to 'set him forth a propitiation through faith in his blood,' and Christ, Col. i. 20, is said to 'make peace through the blood of his cross.' Indeed, there can be no propitiation of wrath without satisfaction of justice, and there can be no satisfaction of justice without shedding of blood,\* whereby the punishment was suffered, which justice required.

2. Christ maketh intercession in the virtue of his blood. Our salvation is obtained, first, *pretio*, and then, *prece*, by laying down a price, and then pleading the payment before God; so that what was once offered, is continually presented.

3. Christ being a propitiation, and so our advocate, must needs speed. Whilst a man is angry, it is in vain to move him for a favour, but, his anger being appeased, there is hopes of success, especially when he pleads who was the means to pacify him. Thus stands the case between God, and Christ, and us;

\* Nititur hæc παρακλήσις unicâ sacrificii vi, &c.—*Bez. in loc.*

God being incensed against us, Christ taketh the chastisement of our peace upon himself, whereby God's wrath was pacified; and he who wrought this reconciliation on earth it is that appeareth for us in heaven; and therefore let us not doubt of the power of this advocate, who cannot but effectually prevail, because he was the propitiation for our sins.

Having viewed the context, let us look upon the clause itself, wherein there is a double truth, the one implicit, the other explicit, to wit, sin's provocation, and Christ's pacification.

Our sins incense the wrath of God against us; that is implied.

Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins; that is expressed.

Of the former briefly, because it is but intimated; of the latter, more largely and fully.

1. Sin's provocation is manifestly couched in this clause, and accordingly taken notice of by interpreters,\* since there were no need of a propitiation for, if there were no provocation by, our sins. It is the note of St Chrysostom upon the phrases of reconciling and making peace,† in the Colossians, that the one implieth an enmity, the other a war; and the same may be made here, the propitiation supposeth wrath. And as it is here intimated, so it is elsewhere asserted by St Paul to the Romans, chap. i. 18, when he saith, 'the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men;' and, consequently, against men for all their unrighteousness and ungodliness. In this respect it is that he calleth all men 'by nature children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3; and why this? Because they are born in sin. Indeed, God made man (as Solomon's phrase is, Eccles. vii. 29) upright, and so long as he stood in that integrity, there was *pax amicitia*, a peace of amity and friendship between God and man, 'but they sought out many inventions,' by which God was most justly provoked to anger. Thus, at first, and ever since, sin hath proved the make-bait, the kindle-coal, that incendiary between the Creator and his creature.

And how can it be otherwise, since there cannot but be enmity where there is contrariety? And there is nothing more contrary to God than sin; nay, there is nothing contrary to him but sin. It is opposite to him in his pure nature, it robbeth and spoileth him of his glory, it transgresseth and rebelleth against his law; and therefore must needs incur his displeasure. It is observable in Scripture, that as members, so senses are after the manner of men attributed to God, and sin is represented as offensive to every one of them. It grateth his ears, and therefore he complaineth of the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. xviii. 20; it disreliseth his taste, in which respect it is compared to

\* *Innuit nos nostris peccatis Deum nobis infensum reddidisse* — *Zanch.*

† *Τὸ δὲ τῆν ἰχθῆσαν δίκηνουσι καταλλαγὰς, τὸ δὲ τὸν πόλεμον ἱερνοποιήσας* — *Chrys. hom. 3 in Colos.*

leaven, Gal. iv. 6, and that especially for its sourness; it oppreseth his feeling, according to his own expression, Amos ii. 13, 'I am pressed under you, as a cart is under sheaves;' it disgusteth his smell, for which cause sinners are said to be corrupt, Ps. xiv. 1, where the metaphor is borrowed from a rotten carcase, which stinketh in the nostrils of a man; finally, it offendeth his sight, and therefore, Hab. ii. 13, he is said to be 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' to wit, without fury.

It is a meditation that should convince us of,

1. The odious nature of sin. Are any persons more abominable than the contentious? Solomon justly declaimeth against him that soweth discord among brethren, Prov. vi. 19. That beatitude of our Saviour, Mat. v. 6, carrieth in it, according to the rule of contraries, a curse: Cursed are the peace-breakers, for they shall be called the children of the devil. But (O my brethren) how accursed and hateful a thing is sin, which hath broke the peace, not between man and man only, but God and man, and hath sown discord between, not only brother and brother, but father and son. Oh that this thought might stir up in us a zealous indignation against sin. God forbid that that which is his hate should be our love, that that should find favour with us which provoketh his wrath against us; nay, rather, since sin displeaseth God, let it displease us, and let our anger wax hot against that which causeth his wrath to wax hot against us.

2. The miserable estate of a sinner, because he is under the wrath of God. *Cælestis ira quos premit miseris facit*,\* divine anger is an insupportable burden. The sinning angels are not able to stand under it, but fall immediately from heaven, Jude ver. 6; the great men, the mighty men, cannot abide it, but 'cry to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us,' Rev. vi. 15, 16. No wonder if the psalmist put the question, 'Who may stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry?' Ps. lxxvi. 7. And now tell me, sinners, have not we most justly incurred this sore displeasure; hath not God, both by the sin of our nature and transgressions of our life, been provoked against us from our mother's womb to this day? If one sin be sufficient fuel for this fire, what a flame of wrath burneth against us, whose sins have been numerous, or rather innumerable! All which being seriously pondered, methinketh grief and anguish, trembling and astonishment, horror and amazement, should take hold of us. David, feeling some drops or sparks of this anger, saith, Ps. xxxviii. 3, 'there was no rest in his bones by reason of it.' Truly, if we do not feel, we have cause continually to be in fear, not only of drops, but floods, sparks, but flakes of this vengeance. How can we be secure and quiet? And if there be any awakened conscience, wounded soul, which crieth out, What shall I do? I answer, God's wrath is insupportable, but not unavoidable; it cannot be endured, but it may

\* *Sen. Trag. Herc.*



be prevented; we are not able to stand under it, we may fly from it, and that by flying to him whom my text speaketh of, as the propitiation. And so I am fallen on the explicit verity which is here plainly and directly laid down.

2. Christ's pacification. 'He is the propitiation for our sins.' It is both assertive and exclusive, carrying in it both an affirmative and a negative. He is, and none but he, or he only, is the propitiation. Of both which in order.

1. He is the propitiation. God's wrath towards man sinning is pacified by Christ suffering. The Rabbins say of the Messiah, that when he cometh, he shall be *כיפר אֵלֵינוּ* a reconciling man, and the apostle's assertion is express, Rom. v. 1, 'We have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' It is the testimony which the Father gave concerning Christ at his baptism, Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' by which latter clause is (according to Euthymius, Cajetan, and others\*) expressed that favour which God in Christ beareth towards us. As he is in himself beloved, so in him God is with us well pleased, according to that of St Paul, Eph. i. 5, 'He hath made us accepted in the beloved,' and therefore accepted because reconciled, well pleased in him because his wrath is appeased by him towards us. Among other resemblances by which Christ is set forth in Scripture, that of a stone is one, 1 Pet. ii. 5, and very apt to our present purpose. Since, as in respect of Satan, he is *lapis triumphalis*, a stone of victory and triumph, dashing that Goliath in the forehead, so in respect of God he is *lapis fœdificus*, a stone of league and amity, such as that between Laban and Jacob, or rather *lapis angularis*, a corner stone, Ps. cxviii. 22; for as this uniteth the walls, which were one separate from the other, together, so doth he unite, and that not only Jews and Gentiles to one another, but both to God.

This is that truth which the apostle Paul plainly asserts, in those scriptures which speak of reconciliation to God. Thus he saith, 2 Cor. v. 18, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; and again, Eph. ii. 16, Christ is said to 'reconcile both' (to wit, Jew and Gentile) 'unto God in one body by the cross;' and again, Col. i. 19, 20, 'It pleased the Father, by him, having made peace through the blood of his cross, to reconcile all things to himself.' It would not be passed by what is by Socinians objected against these scriptures, that they speak only of our being reconciled to God, not of God's being reconciled to us, and so prove not any pacification of divine wrath by Christ's death; whence it is that they understand this reconciling of us to God to be no more than the turning of us from sin to God by true repentance.

But to vindicate this great truth, and that as

\* In quo hominibus bona volui.—Euthymius. Habeo in eo complacentiam ad redimendum et reconciliandum genus humanum.—Cajet.

asserted in those scriptures, be pleased to consider briefly that,

Though the phrase only run in this strain, the reconciling us to God, yet it doth not therefore follow that the reconciliation is only on our part, and not on God's; nay rather, the one involveth the other, since if we were not sinners, there were no need of reconciling us to God. And being sinners, there is no less need of his being reconciled to us, unless we will say, that sin doth not provoke him, which is to deny him to be a God. And though this reconciliation, being mutual, doth no less imply God's to us than ours to him, yet it is very fitly thus expressed, because God is the *pars offensa*, the party offended, and man is *pars offendens*, the party offending. He that offendeth another is more properly said to be reconciled to him whom he hath injured, than he that is offended. In which respect Christ adviseth him who bringeth his gift to the altar, 'If he remember his brother have aught against him, to go and be reconciled to his brother,' Mat. v. 23, 24. And St Paul wisheth the woman that departeth to be reconciled to her husband, as having by departing offended him, 1 Cor. vii. 11. But as the reconciling of a woman to her husband, and a trespasser to his brother, is the pacifying, the one of her husband's anger, the other of his brother's displeasure, justly conceived against them, so the reconciling us to God is the appeasing of his wrath towards us, which for our sins was incensed against us. And that this is St Paul's meaning, appeareth plainly in one of those fore-cited places, where the manner how God in Christ reconcileth us to himself is expressed to be his 'not imputing our trespasses,' 2 Cor. v. 19, 21; and Christ, in whom we are thus reconciled, is said to do it by being 'made sin for us.' It is not therefore our turning from sin to God, but Christ becoming a sacrifice for our sins, and God's not imputing our sins to us for his sake, which is our reconciliation to God; and inasmuch as it is God who, being offended, receiveth us again into favour, therefore it is ascribed to him as his act; and because it is Christ who hath by his death appeased God's anger, therefore it is attributed to him. And so the clear meaning of our apostle appeareth to be the same with that which here St John asserts and intends, when he saith of Christ, 'He is the propitiation for our sins.'

And because the Socinians (being resolved to make all Scripture stoop to their reason) endeavour to pervert this text, as if it were only a delivering us from the wrath to come upon impenitents, by turning us from our sins, give me leave to set before you the genuine sense of this word, which our apostle here useth, and that both in its native signification and legal allusion.

1. If we consider this word in its native signification, we shall find that the verb *ἰλάσκειται* (whence *ἰλασμός* in the text cometh), in all writers, both sacred

and profane, poets, orators, historians, as the learned Grotius hath observed, \* signifieth to appease, or pacify, or render propitious, and is usually construed with an accusative expressing the person whose anger is pacified. Indeed, there is one place in the Hebrews, chap. ii. 17, where, being joined with ἀμαρτίας, the plural accusative, it is rendered to expiate the sins of the people; but either the use of the word there must be altogether different from its sense of perpetual signification, or it must signify such an expiation as tends to a pacification. And so it is all one whether you read it here, he is the expiation, or he is the propitiation, since the one depends on the other, and by expiating our sins it is that he propitiateth God towards us.

2. If we consider this word in its legal allusion, we shall find a double reference which may be made of it.

1. To the mercy-seat, which covered the ark where the law was, whence God gave answers, and from which he shewed himself propitious to the people; whereof we read in the book of Exodus, chap. xxv. 21. Hence the Seventy, and the author to the Hebrews, chap. ix. 5, from thence call it ἱλαστήριον, a propitiatory. To this the apostle Paul manifestly alludeth, where the very same word is used, when he saith, Rom. iii. 25, 'Him hath God set forth a propitiation;' and possibly St John in this word might have the same reference. Indeed, Christ may well be called the propitiatory, or a propitiation, in allusion to the mercy-seat, since there is a fit analogy between them. For as it covered the law, so Christ the transgressions of the law; as thence God gave answers, so by Christ his evangelical oracles are revealed; and as from thence God shewed himself propitious, so is he in Christ well pleased. But in this last analogy (in which respect it was called a propitiatory, and serveth to our present purpose), though there is a fitness, yet not a fulness, for whereas the mercy-seat is called the propitiatory, only because it had *vim declarativam*, a declarative virtue to signify, Christ is the propitiation, as having *vim effectivam*, an operative energy to procure, divine favour. And therefore was God pleased to manifest himself benevolous from the mercy-seat, because it was a type of Christ, in whom he is propitiated towards sinners. In vain, therefore, do the Socinians confine the antitype to the type, as if that Christ must be in no other sense a propitiation than the mercy-seat was, since it is sufficient to make a type, that there be in some things a similitude, though not in all things an equality; nor is it any wonder if there be more energy in the body than in the shadow, since the shadow is but a resemblance of the body.

2. Besides this allusion, which no doubt is most congruous to St Paul's phrase, there is another more suitable to this of St John, and that is in reference to the sacrifices of expiation and atonement. Almighty God in the law appointed both the burnt-offering for

sin in general, and trespass-offerings for particular sins, by which being offered up, he became appeased towards the sinner. Now all those sacrifices did look at Christ, and the atonement which was made by them was not, as considered in themselves, but as they did typify Christ's death, and the propitiation to be wrought by it.

That those sacrifices did all of them typify Christ, seemeth to me an undoubted truth; and that among others for this reason, because by Christ's death they were abolished, and became *mortua*, dead; yea, soon after *mortifera*, not only dead, but deadly, upon this account, that to continue those sacrifices was to deny Christ.

That whatsoever efficacy those sacrifices had towards atonement, was only in reference to Christ, must needs follow upon the former; since, as when the antitype is accomplished, the type ceaseth, so the vigour of the type, whilst in being, is from its relation to the antitype. In this respect it is that, under the legal administrations, the people offering sacrifices were minded of Christ, and believing in him. And God was propitiated by those sacrifices, as they did prefigure, and so as it were mind him of Christ, to be offered up a real and effectual propitiation.

To close up this, it would not be passed by how emphatical our apostle's expression is, in that he doth not only say of Christ, he is ἱλάστης, but ἱλασμός, a propitiator, but the propitiation itself; that is, *victima*, ἱλαστική, the propitiatory sacrifice. Indeed, he is both the priest and the sacrifice, the propitiator and the propitiation; according to which is that of Origen,\* God hath set him forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, that by the sacrifice of his body he might render God propitious to men. In one word (to speak after the schools †), inasmuch as Christ by his death did *removere peccatum*, take away the guilt of sin, which causeth the enmity, and *offerre sacrificium Deo acceptissimum*, offer up a sacrifice most grateful to God, he might be truly said to be the propitiation.

There is only one objection which carrieth in it a show of reason, and therefore calls for a solution. It is drawn from those Scriptures in which God's love to mankind is set down as the cause of sending Christ into the world, John iii. 16, 1 John iv. 9; whereas, if Christ's coming into the world to die did propitiate God for our sins, this love of his towards man should be the effect, not the cause. And those scriptures should have run thus, not, *God so loved the world that he sent*, but, *God sent his Son into the world that he might love it*; and not in this was the love of God manifested, but by this was the love of God procured, to wit, the sending his only begotten Son.

To untie this knot, you may please to know that these two assertions are not irreconcilable. God's love to us moved him to send Christ to die; Christ's

\* Orig. in Rom.

† Aquin. Summ. pars. iii. q. xlix. art. iv.

\* Vide Grot. de Satis.



dying moveth him to love us. Indeed, the love of God to man is in one respect the cause, and in another the effect, of Christ's death; and that thus it appeared to St John is plain, in that he puts these two together in one verse, 1 John iv. 10, 'He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

To clear the truth hereof briefly, observe these distinctions.

1. Man fallen is to be considered (say the schools\*) two ways, either *quantum ad naturam*, or *quantum ad culpam*, as made by God or marred by sin. He loved us as the work of his hands, and that love was the cause of sending Christ. He hated us as transgressors of his law; and Christ by making satisfaction removeth that hatred and obtaineth his favour.

2. There is a twofold love of God towards man: the one of commiseration and benevolence, † whereby he was reconcilable, yea, himself appointed the way of reconciliation, and this love was the cause of Christ's death; the other of friendship or complacency, whereby he becomes actually reconciled, and so conferreth all good upon us; and this love is the effect of Christ's death. It is observable concerning the friends of Job, that God said to them, 'My wrath is kindled against you: therefore take seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept,' Job xlii. 7, 8; wherein it appeareth, God so far tendered them as to acquaint them with his wrath, and the means of pacifying it; but his wrath was not removed till those means were used. An enemy may so far love as to propose and offer conditions of peace to his adversary, but till those conditions be accomplished and performed, there is no amity between them. So is it in this case, though God loved us so as to propose, nay, indeed, to perfect the means of reconciliation, yet still he is not actually reconciled to us; but only in and by those means, the chief whereof is Christ's passion. The sum of all then amounts to this: God, considered without respect to Christ, was, though *iratus*, yet *placabilis*, actually angry, yet so as that there was a possibility of appeasing it. He was not so far provoked with men as with the angels, for whom he would not appoint nor accept a ransom; but still it is only in and through Christ that he becometh *placatus*, actually appeased towards sinners.

3. He *only* is the propitiation for our sins. Only Moses must go up to God in the mount; none but the high priest must enter with the blood into the holy of holies. Christ alone must mediate with God for man. Indeed, there was not, could not be found in heaven or earth, any one fit or able to undertake

this work. This will the better appear, if we consider, that whosoever would become a propitiation for our sins, must both be free himself from all sin, and be both capable and able to undergo the punishment of our sins.

(1.) He must be free from sin, and therefore we could not propitiate God for ourselves. Can it be imagined a rebel should pacify the king towards himself or fellow-rebel? Whatever we could do whilst in our sins were but *evaginato gladio pacem petere*, seeking for peace with a drawn sword in our hand against our sovereign. Indeed, the good works of them that are in Christ do *placere*, but not *pacare*, please, not appease, and that only as dyed in Christ's blood. But we are in a state of sin; nothing we do can please, much less pacify, the Almighty. The truth is (to use Ferus\* his similitude), all the works we do are in themselves but as a ring of iron, and could not so much as gain acceptance, were it not for faith, which sets into them, as it were, the precious gem of Christ's merits.

(2.) He must be capable and able to bear the punishment of our sins. There can be no propitiation for, without expiation of, sin. The expiation of sin is by suffering the punishment; and, the sin being committed against an infinite Majesty, the suffering by which it is expiated must be of infinite value. In these respects it is impossible that any or all the angels, though holy and just, should propitiate God for our sins, since, as angels, they were not capable of the punishment; and though they should have assumed human nature, yet, being but finite creatures, the worth of their sufferings could not be infinite; only Christ in himself being altogether pure, and therefore called 'Jesus Christ the righteous,' in the end of the former verse, and being both God and man, and so able as God and capable as man of undergoing such a penalty as should, by reason of the infiniteness of his person, be of infinite merit, is the propitiation for our sins.

To end this. The propitiation here spoken of may be considered several ways, and accordingly it may have several causes, as decreed, published, applied, purchased. The decree and intention of this propitiation is the work of the whole Trinity, though especially attributed to the Father. The declaring and publication of it is the work of Christ's ministers, to whom 'is committed the word of reconciliation.' The effectual application of it to every one in particular is done, principally by the Spirit, and instrumentally by faith. But still the purchase and procurement of it is only by the blood of Christ; *nemo prater illum, nemo cum illo*, there was none besides him, there was none to join with him; he alone did undertake and accomplish the work of reconciliation.

Having briefly, and, I trust, in some measure, clearly, explicated the explicit truth of this clause, give me leave in a few words to apply it.

\* Fer. in loc.

\* Aquin. pars. iii. qu. xlix. art. iv.

† Affectus commiserationis sive benefaciendi voluntas, affectus conjunctionis et amicitia.—Calov. Socin. profitig. Amor benevolentia et ordinativus. Amor complacentia et collativus.—Arnold.

1. In the sense of God's wrath for our sins, whither should we go but to Christ for reconciliation? Far be it from us to think we can pacify God for our sins by our prayers or tears or alms,\* in all which God's severe eye of justice would find matter of provocation. Far be it from us to place our hopes of God's favour towards us in the merits and mediation of saints or angels, who themselves are beholden to this mediator. The truth is, *Propter filii meritum mater invenit gratiam*, the mother's peace was made by the son's blood, and therefore to him, and him alone, let us have recourse as our only peacemaker.

And would you know how to go to him? I answer, by faith. *Accedit qui credit*, he cometh to who believeth on Christ; and as there is no propitiation but through him, so there is no propitiation through him to us but by laying hold on him; in which respect the apostle doth not only say, 'God hath set forth Christ a propitiation through his blood,' but 'through *faith* in his blood,' and therefore, being sensible of divine pleasure, let us embrace Christ in the arms of our faith, that God for his sake may be propitious to us.

2. In the confidence of this propitiation wrought for us by Christ, how infinitely should we account ourselves obliged to our blessed Jesus? The more to imprint this mediation upon us, consider—

(1.) What the benefit is which Christ hath procured, propitiation for our sins; a benefit which hath many blessings to attend upon it, such as are acceptance of our persons and performances, nearness of union and fulness of communion with God, boldness of access to the throne of grace, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Christ saith to every believing soul that hath an interest in his propitiation, in words much like those to his disciples, John xvi. 33, 'Be of good cheer; I have pacified the Father's wrath towards thee. God saith to every such person for whom he hath accepted Christ's propitiation, in words much like those to Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 20, 'It is my dear son, it is my pleasant child; though I spake against thee, I do earnestly remember thee: I will surely have mercy on thee;' and,

(2.) Who are we for whom Christ vouchsafed to become a propitiation? Jonathan stood between Saul's fury and David; good reason, Saul's rage was causeless, David was innocent; but God's anger was just, and we were offenders. The people mediated between Saul and Jonathan when he tasted of the honey; but Jonathan had offended ignorantly, we have been wilful, presumptuous rebels. Abigail pacified David's wrath against Nabal, but he was her husband; Esther diverteth Ahasuerus his rage from the Jews, but they were her countrymen; but, lo! Christ becometh a propitiation for our sins who were strangers, not allies,

enemies, not friends, enemies to him as well as the Father, and yet for our sins he propitiateth.

(3.) When there was no other way left of propitiation, he undertaketh it. 'I looked,' saith Christ, Isa. lxiii. 5, 'and there was none to help; I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation.' If all those glorious angels had with united endeavours sought to reconcile God to man, it could not have been accomplished. As God saith in another case, Ezek. xiv. 14, 20, 'Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in the land, they should deliver but their own souls, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters,' so he seemed to say in this. Though Gabriel, Michael, yea, all the myriads of angels, had not only entreated, but in assumed bodies suffered, they should not have propitiated my wrath towards one man for the least sin; and as Elisha said to Ahab, 2 Kings iii. 14, 'Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, I would not look towards thee, nor see thee;' so God saith to us, Were it not that I regard the passion and intercession of my Son, I would not vouchsafe the least look of grace or favour towards you.

(4.) That Christ might be the propitiation for our sins, he was pleased to offer himself a sacrifice. Our blessed Saviour appearing to his disciples after his resurrection, said, 'Peace be to you, and shewed them his hands and feet,' John xx. 19, 20, as if he would say, See how dear your peace cost me. Thus the case stood. We had offended, God was provoked; wrath was ready to strike us, Christ steps in and taketh the blow upon himself; and so, by his suffering, God is pacified towards us.

And now, putting all these together, that when none could, Christ would, and that\* undertake so great a work as the reconciling offended justice; and when no other means would prevail but blood and death, Christ should be willing to lay down his own life, and this for our sins, who were so unworthy of the least regard: oh tell me if each of these severally, much more all jointly, be not strong obligations of love and thankfulness! How should every believing sinner, in the apprehension hereof, break forth into these or the like ejaculations: Dearest Jesus, didst thou procure thy Father's love to me, and shall it not engage my love to thee! Didst thou snatch me as a brand out of the fire of God's wrath, and shall not I be inflamed with affection towards thee! The propitiation which thou hast wrought for me was undeserved, nay, undesired, shall it be altogether unrequited! It is true I cannot recompense, but surely I will acknowledge it; I will love and bless and praise thee for it, saying in words much like those of the angels, *Worthy is the lamb that was slain a sacrifice, and so a propitiation for my sins, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!*

\* *Scelesti in animum inducunt suum, Jovem posse placari omnibus hostiis.—Plaut.*

\* Qu. 'did'?—Ed.



## SERMON XXII.

And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.—  
1 JOHN II. 2.

WORDS amiable as beauty to the eye, harmonious as music to the ear, sweet as honey to the taste, and joyous as wine to the heart. Who can read them and not be affected? hear them and not be ravished? meditate on them and not be delighted? believe them and not be comforted? *Diligenter observanda cordibusque inseribenda sunt hæc verba*, saith Ferus\* aptly. These words deserve to be written, yea, engraven upon the tables of our hearts, as containing in them that which cannot but afford unspeakable joy to the wounded conscience. The person spoken of is Jesus Christ, whose very name is as a precious ointment; the thing spoken of is a pacification between God and sinners, than which no perfume can be sweeter. Finally, this benefit is set forth as obtained by this person, not for a few, but many, some, but all, and so like the light diffusing itself through the whole world; and therefore I trust, since we are all concerned in, we shall all be diligently attentive to, this precious scripture: 'And he is the propitiation for our sins,' &c.

Having already unfolded the nature, we are now to handle the extent of this excellent benefit, which is expressed two ways:

Negatively, and not for ours only;

Affirmatively, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1. A word of the former, 'not for ours only.' It is that which lets us see the nature of faith.

True faith applieth, but doth not appropriate; or if you will, it doth appropriate, but it doth not appropriate to itself. A believer so maketh Christ his own, as that still he is, or may be, another's as well as his; and the reason of this is,

Partly in regard of the nature of the object, which is such that it is capable of being communicated to many as well as few; for as the air is a means of refocillation, the sun an instrument of illumination, and the sea a place of navigation for the people of our country, and yet not ours only, those being things so communicative, that every one may have a share in them; nor is one man's or people's enjoying an hindrance to another; so is Christ a propitiation for the sins of St John and the rest of believers then living, but not for theirs only, he being *κοινων ἀγαθῶν*, a common good, and his propitiation such as that the participation of it by some doth not at all impede others from having the like interest.

And partly in respect of the temper of the subject, this being the frame of a believer's spirit, that he would have others partake of the same benefit with himself. The apostle St Paul saith of faith, Gal. v. 6, that it 'worketh by love,' and accordingly as faith

\* Fer. in loc.

brings Christ home to itself, so the love by which it worketh is desirous he might be imparted to others. To this purpose it is observable, that that holy apostle, when he speaketh of a crown which shall be given to him, 2 Tim. iv. 8, presently addeth, 'and not to me only,' as here St John, 'for our sins, and not for ours only.'

To wind up this. Whereas there are two objections amongst others made against the applying act of faith, as if it were a bold presumption in regard of Christ, and an uncharitable excluding of others from having the same benefit, to say he is ours, and that he is the propitiation for our sins, both will be found no better than calumnies; since, on the one hand, faith's particular application is within the bounds, and according to the tenure of the gospel promise, and therefore it is no presumption; and, on the other hand, faith's applying Christ to ourselves is not thereby to withhold him from any other, and therefore it is no uncharitableness; for whilst faith saith, 'He is the propitiation for our sins,' love addeth, and 'not for ours only.' And so much, or rather so little, of the negative; pass we on to the,

2. Affirmative clause, 'but also for the sins of the whole world.' *Favores ampliandi* is a rule in the civil law,\* favours are to be extended to the utmost; so doth our apostle here this benefit of Christ's propitiation. *Amplificatio est misericordie Dei*, it is an amplification of God's mercy, and Christ's merit, and that

1. Implicitly, in respect of the object, since Christ did not pacify God only for the original sins of our natures, but the actual sins of our life, and not only for one, but for all kinds of sins. The sins of the whole world are a world of sins. What a numberless number of sins are every day committed in the world; yea, what sin is there so vile, so heinous, which cometh not within this latitude, the sins of the whole world; so that this propitiation extends itself, not only to one, but many, lesser, but greater sins. Not the multitude, nor the magnitude of all the sins which are acted in the world, can exceed the virtue of Christ's propitiation, and therefore though the particle *τῶν* be elliptically cut off in the Greek, both it and its substantive are fitly supplied in our translation, 'for the sins of the whole world.' But, further, this enlargement is chiefly to be considered,

2. Explicitly, in regard of the subject, the persons to whom this propitiation belongs; and it is set forth with the fullest advantage that may be. Indeed, there are divers phrases by which this universality is represented. Sometimes it is said, 'He gave his life a

\* Naogorg.

ransom for many,' Mat. xx. 20, and that is opposed to a few. More than this, it is said that 'he died for all,' 2 Cor. v. 14, and that he 'gave himself a ransom for all,' 1 Tim. ii. 6; yea, the author to the Hebrews saith, chap. ii. 9, 'He tasted death for every man;' not only *all* in general, but *every man* in particular. In like manner the usual phrase of the Scripture, when it speaketh of the subject of reconciliation and salvation, is in the comprehensive word *world*: 'God so loved the world,' John iii. 16; 'God was in Christ reconciling the world,' 2 Cor. v. 19; and again, in this epistle, 1 John iv. 14, 'Him hath God sent to be the Saviour of the world;' and yet, as if this were not large enough to this extensive substantive, is here in the text annexed an universal adjective, whilst he saith not only *the world*, but *the whole world*.

That this is so must be granted, or else the Scripture must be denied, which hath so frequently and plainly asserted it. The only thing to be inquired is, in what sense this is to be understood, and how it is verified. I well know there is much dispute among learned and godly men about the interpretation of this and such like scriptures. For my own part, I have a reverent esteem of many of them, who hold the several opinions, and I could heartily wish that such questions, having much to be said either way, both from Scripture and reason, might be more calmly debated than they are by some; and the assertors on either hand less censorious each of other. That which I shall now endeavour, is (according to the measure of light I have received by prayer, reading, meditation, and conference) positively to acquaint you what I conceive to be truth, and shew you how far we may safely extend, and so how we may genuinely expound, this clause, 'He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.'

To this end, let your attention go along with me, whilst I shall prosecute two or three distinctions.

*Distinction 1.* This assertion, Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, may be understood either *exclusively* or *inclusively*, and in both considerations it is in some respect or other true.

1. To say, Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world *exclusively*, imports thus much, that there is no propitiation for the sins of the whole world but only by Christ; and thus we may take the whole world in its full latitude, *pro omnibus et singulis*, and need not fear to assert that there never was, nor will be, any man, from the first Adam to the end of the world, who did, shall, or can obtain propitiation for his sins except through Christ. Indeed, God (according both to Moses and Paul's phrase, Deut. iv. 24, Heb. xii. 29) 'is a consuming fire,' and all mankind being fallen in Adam, is as stubble and straw to that fire, which must needs be consumed by it, if Christ's blood did not prevent that consumption by quenching the fire of his displeasure. Hence it is that St Paul saith expressly, 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ re-

conciling the world to himself,' thereby intimating, that, were it not for Christ, the world could not be reconciled to him. To this purpose it is that the apostle Peter, speaking of Christ, useth a negative proposition, Acts iv. 12, 'Neither is there salvation in any other,' and enforceth it with a strong confirmation, 'for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;' where that expression 'under heaven' is very observable, as comprising in it the whole earth which is under heaven, with all the inhabitants therein. It is the promise of God to Abraham, Gen. xxii. 18, that 'in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed.' That seed St Paul expounds mystically of Christ,' Gal. iii. 8; and Lyra's gloss\* is, *quia nullus consequitur salutem nisi per Christi benedictionem*, because none can attain eternal life but through Christ's benediction; and not much unlike is Beza's† note on this place, Christ is the propitiation for the whole world, *ut noverimus nusquam esse salutem extra Christum*, that we may know salvation is not to be had anywhere without Christ.

From hence it is that may be inferred, which elsewhere is expressed, that since there is no propitiation but by Christ, none can partake of this propitiation but by faith in him; and the strength of the inference is built upon this foundation.

Whosoever have propitiation by Christ must be in Christ, and therefore St Paul saith of the Ephesians, chap. ii. 12, whilst heathens, they were 'without Christ,' and presently addeth in the same verse, 'having no hope;' as if he would say, There is no hope of salvation for them that are without Christ.

None but they who believe in Christ are in him, and therefore the apostle saith, chap. iii. 17, Christ 'dwelleth in our hearts by faith;' and those two phrases, *being in the faith*, and *Christ being in us*, are used by him in one verse, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, as one expository of the other. The result of both which propositions is, that seeing there is no propitiation without Christ, and without being in Christ none can obtain that propitiation, but they who believe in him, agreeable to which it is that St Paul saith, Rom. iii. 25, 'God hath set him forth a propitiation through faith in his blood.'

Indeed, this must be rightly understood, and to that end qualified with these distinctions of seminal and actual, of implicit and explicit faith, and of faith in Christ as to come, and as come. Christ is no doubt a propitiation for all circumcised and baptized children dying in their infancy, who yet cannot actually believe in him; but they have after an extraordinary way the Spirit of Christ conferred on them, and so the seed of faith and all other graces in them. Christ was no doubt a propitiation for those before his coming, as well as us, all of whom only believed in him as to come, and many of whom had but only an implicit,

\* Lyr. ib.

† Beza in loc.



not a clear and distinct, faith in the Messiah. Nor will I undertake to determine what degree of knowledge is necessary to that faith in Christ, which is necessary to an interest in this propitiation; but still I say, with the author to the Hebrews, chap. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God;' and that faith is not only to believe that God is, but to believe that 'he is a rewarder of them that seek him,' which cannot be without some knowledge of Christ. Since it is only in an evangelical sense that he is a rewarder, and as he is no rewarder of any that seek him, but for Christ's sake, so none can rightly believe him a rewarder, who is altogether ignorant of Christ.

Indeed, when our blessed Saviour saith, John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,' what doth he but as it were define eternal life by the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, this knowledge being both the way and the end, that wherein it consists and that whereby it is obtained? And more fully, when he saith, John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,' what doth he but set down believing in Christ as the way whereby the whole world must escape perishing? Finally, when St Paul, speaking of Jew and Greek, maketh calling on the name of the Lord Christ, the means of salvation, Rom. x. 12-14, and annexeth believing in as necessary to the calling on him, what doth he but intimate, that without believing in him there can be no salvation?

By all which we may see how miserable the condition of all those is who have no interest in Christ by faith. If no interest in him, no propitiation by him; and if no propitiation by him, there can none be had elsewhere. And therefore John the Baptist saith of every unbeliever, John iii. 36, 'The wrath of God abideth on him,' a burden so heavy that it must needs press down to hell. And which followeth upon this, we may see what great reason we have to pity and pray for all pagans and infidels, to whom Christ, and propitiation by him, is not so much as revealed. Indeed, that heathens who never heard of Christ shall be condemned for not believing in him, I believe not; the light of nature will be enough to render them inexcusable: but how they, not at all hearing, and so not at all believing in him, should be saved by him, I cannot see by any light of Scripture. That those among them whose lives have been eminent for moral virtues might have Christ by some extraordinary way made known unto them, and so be brought to faith in him, I am willing to hope. However, that God's wrath is not so hot against them as others, yea, that it shall be 'more tolerable' for them than many who are in name Christians, I confidently assert; but how without Christ, and any knowledge of him, they should obtain propitiation, and so salvation, I know not. The only charity which we can and ought to exercise to-

wards them who are now alive, is to commiserate their condition, and pour out our supplications, that God would cause the light of the knowledge of Christ to shine in upon them who at present 'sit in darkness and the shadow of death.' And so much for this interpretation.

2. The more generally received, and, indeed, most genuine, exposition of these words is by way of *inclusion*, according to which the sense is, that Christ is a propitiation not only for some, but all, even the whole world.

*Distinct.* 2. To understand this aright, be pleased to know, further, that this phrase, *the whole world*, may be taken either more strictly or largely, according to a double consideration of this propitiation, either in respect of its actual efficacy or virtual sufficiency.

1. These words, 'he is the propitiation,' may be thus construed, he is actually and effectually the propitiation, yea, inasmuch as it is joined with his advocateship. It is very probable this is our apostle's meaning, since Christ is effectually a propitiation to them for whom he is an advocate; and if so, this *whole world* must be construed in the same sense in which *world* is used by St Paul, Rom. xi. 12, 15, where he saith, 'The fall of the Jews is the riches of the world;' that is, as it followeth in the same verse, 'the riches of the Gentiles;' and again, 'the casting away of them, the reconciling of the world.' So here he is the propitiation, not for our sins only (who are Jews), but for the whole world, to wit, the Gentiles in all parts and ages of the world who believe in him. And it will appear so much the more rational by the *world* here to understand the Gentiles, if we consider that the *our* here spoken of most probably refers to the Jews; for St John, who was a Jew, would rather have said *your* than *our*, had not they to whom he wrote been Jews as well as he. And this is further evident by the 7th verse, where he saith that they to whom he did write were such as had heard (to wit, what he wrote) from the beginning, and those were the Jews, to whom Christ was first sent and preached.

According to this construction, the sense of this scripture will be best explained by paralleling it with those two texts in the Gospel, the one concerning Caiaphas, of whom the evangelist saith, John xi. 51, 52, 'He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.' The other Christ's own words, in that excellent prayer wherein he saith, John xvii. 20, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.' Thus Christ is the propitiation, not only for us who are of the Jewish nation, and live in this present age, but for them also of the Gentiles who now do, or hereafter to the end of the world, shall believe in him. And, however, the number of them that believe, and have Christ effectually a propitiation to them, is still but

small comparatively, in which respect it may seem strange they should be called the whole world; yet considering that whereas before Christ came the believers of the Old Testament were only to be found in Jewry (some few, very few, proselytes of the Gentiles excepted), now since Christ's death the believers of the New Testament are to be found (as St Austin\* speaketh) among all sorts of persons, in all nations, at some time or other, and so dispersed through the whole world; as they congruously are called in our creed the catholic church, so here by St John the whole world, to which purpose is that excellent speech of St Ambrose,† The people of God hath its fulness, and there is as it were a particular generality, whilst all men are taken out of all men, and a whole world is chosen and saved out of the whole world.

This exposition of these words, as it appeareth not to be irrational, so it wants not the consent of many interpreters,‡ not only modern but ancient. The design of St John (saith Calvin) in these words, is no other than to assert this benefit of propitiation common to the whole church. Lest he should be thought, by saying *our*, to restrain Christ's propitiation only to the Jews, he addeth *the whole world*; so Beza. Besides these neoterics, we find this to be St Austin's interpretation, speaking occasionally in one of his epistles § upon this text: As (saith he) the whole world is said to lie in wickedness, because of the tares, so Christ is said to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, because of the wheat which groweth throughout the whole world. Yea, the Greek fathers render this very sense of these words; so Ecumenius upon the text itself. This he saith either because he wrote to the Jews, that he might extend this benefit to the Gentiles, or because the promise was not only made to those in that time, but all that shall come after them. So St Cyril,|| comparing this scripture with that of Christ's in the Gospel, 'I pray not for the world,' reconcilith them by affirming, that where St John saith *the whole world*, he meaneth them that should be called of all nations, through faith, to righteousness and holiness.

That which, according to this construction, we are to take notice of, is the largeness of God's grace to the times of the New above that to those of the Old Testament. They who, since the coming of Christ, partake effectually of his propitiation, are of all sorts and ages of the world; to which purpose is that acknowledgment which the four-and-twenty elders in the Revelation make to Christ, Rev. v. 19, 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.' Among other resemblances, Christ is compared by the

prophet Malachi to the sun, chap. iv. 2; and among others for this reason,\* because, like the sun, he communicates light, heat, life to all parts of the world; and therefore he saith of himself, 'I am the light of the world;' and again, 'I give life to the world.' It is well observed, that the first promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, was not made to Abraham the father of the Jews, but to Adam the father of the whole world; and whereas the Jews call Christ the Son of Abraham, John vi. 33, and the Son of David, John viii. 12, who were Jews, Christ usually calleth himself the Son of man, which taketh in Gentiles as well as Jews. In this respect it is well taken notice of, that the place of Christ's birth was *domus publici juris*, not a private house, but an inn, which is open for all passengers; and that not in a chamber, but the stable, which is the commonest place of the inn; for though every guest hath his chamber private, yet the stable is common to them all; to mind us that he who was born should be a common Saviour to high and low, noble and base, rich and poor. Besides, the superscription upon his cross was written, as St Cyril † and Theophylact ‡ observe, not only in Hebrew, the language of the Jews, but in Greek and Latin, the languages of the Gentiles; and the cross was erected not within the city, but 'without the gate,' to intimate, saith Leo,§ *ut crux Christi non templi esset ara, sed mundi*, that it was not an altar of the temple, but the world. Indeed, what part of the world is it that Christ's propitiation reacheth not to? St Basil,|| putting the question why the world was redeemed by a cross, maketh this answer, that a cross hath four distinct parts, which represent the four parts of the world, to all which the efficacy of the cross reacheth. An emblem of this truth St Cyprian ¶ hath found in the four letters of the Greek word 'Αδὰμ, which is given to Christ, which letters are the first of those Greek words which signify the four corners of the world; \*\* and St Austin †† in Christ's garment, of which St John saith, 'The soldiers made four parts, to each soldier a part,' John xix. 27, which he conceived to figure the church, gathered out of the four parts of the world. Indeed, this was God's promise to his Christ, Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the utmost parts of the world for thy possession;' and to his church, Isa. xliii. 5, 6, 'I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back.'

From this assertion it appeareth that the church is (in itself considered) a great multitude; and especially the Christian in comparison of the Jewish church. We read of Noah, Gen. ix. 29, that he blessed his two sons, Shem and Japhet, the former a type of the

\* Aug. in Epist.

† *Populus Dei habet plenitudinem suam, &c.—Aubr. de vocal. Gen. l. i. c. 3.*

‡ Vide Calv. Bez. in loc.

§ Aug. ep. 48.

|| Cyr. in Joh. l. xi. c. 8.

\* Vide Ambros. in Ps. cxviii.

§ Leo de pass. Serm. 8.

† Cyr. in Joh. l. xii. c. 10.

|| Basil in Isa. xi. 12.

‡ Theoph. in Luke.

¶ Cyr. de pass.

\*\* That is, ἀρκτος, δυνις, ανατολη, μισκβρια.—ED.

†† Aug. in Joh. Tr. 118.



Jews, and the latter of the Gentiles. Now, concerning Japhet, he saith, 'God shall enlarge him, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem,' to intimate, saith St Jerome,\* the enlarged multitude of the Gentile believers; and the same father† upon these words of the prophet, Isa. liv. 2, 'Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes,' saith *Hoc intelligitur de ecclesiarum magnitudine*, this is to be understood of the greatness and magnitude of the church, by reason of its spreading over all the world. It is well worthy our observation, that whereas the temple of Solomon had only one gate, 1 Chron. ix. 24, the court of the Gentiles, which compassed the temple, had four, chap. xxvi. 13: yea, the city of the New Jerusalem, an emblem of the Christian church, hath not four but twelve gates, Rev. xxi. 13, three at every corner, and these never shut, to intimate what a continual confluence there should be to Christ from all parts of the earth.

And surely, beloved, *hoc probè norisse multum prodest*,‡ it concerneth us much to meditate on this truth, whereby as the pride of the Jews is humbled, so the hope of the Gentiles is creted. Indeed, since it belongs to the whole world, it may well be matter of great joy, and that such a joy as may put us upon thankfulness for this grace of God which hath appeared to all men, and bringeth salvation, Titus ii. 14. That cloud, which was at first but the breadth of a man's hand, 1 Kings xviii. 44, hath now covered the face of the heavens; that contemptible stone cut out of the mountain hath filled the whole earth, Daniel ii. 35. Christ is as well a light to lighten us Gentiles, as the glory of his people Israel, Luke ii. 32; nor is he a propitiation for the Jews only, but for the whole world of them that believe in him.

2. But further, these words, 'he is the propitiation,' may be construed in respect of the virtue and sufficiency of his propitiation, according to which notion *the whole world* is to be taken in a more comprehensive construction.

*Distinct.* 3. To unfold which he pleased to take notice of a double sufficiency, the one intrinsecal or natural, arising from the worth and value of the thing; the other extrinsecal and positive, arising from the ordination and institution of God, suitable to which this phrase *the whole world* is to be more or less extended.

1. Christ's propitiation is sufficient, as to its natural value, for the sins of the whole world, comprising not only men but angels. There is no doubt merit enough in the blood of Christ to pacify God for the sins of the devils as well as men; and the reason is plain, because the value of Christ's passion depends primarily on the dignity of the person suffering, so that the person being infinite, the value of his passion must be infinite; and since an infinite merit can have no limitation, we may truly say, he is a propitiation sufficient

\* Hier. qu. Hebr. † Id. in Is. ‡ Gualt. in loc.

for the whole world, containing as well spiritual as earthly wickednesses; yea, not only for one, but a thousand worlds; yea, as many millions as we can imagine.

Nor doth the dissimilitude of the nature which Christ took, and in which he suffered, to the angelical, hinder but that his death might in itself be sufficient for angels, if God had so pleased. For what crime of any creature whatsoever can be so heinous, for the expiating of which the shedding of the blood of God cannot suffice? and if Christ obtained confirmation for the angels that stand (as the learned generally acknowledge) that he is not a propitiation for the angels that fell, is only from God's pleasure, not any want of dignity and sufficiency in the price which was paid by him.

2. But when the schools speak of Christ's dying for all sufficiently, and accordingly some expositors\* interpret this expiation 'sufficient for the sins of the whole world;' it is as the learned Davenant hath excellently observed, and solidly proved, another kind of value, to wit, such as ariseth from divine ordination; and thus, though we must exclude angels, and consider men only as *riatores*, whilst they are in the way, since (as St Bernard truly) the blood of Christ which was shed on earth goeth not down to hell,† yet we are by *the whole world* to understand *omnes et singulos*, all and every man that hath been, is, or shall be, in the world; so that we may truly assert, it was the intention of God giving Christ, and Christ offering himself, to lay down such a price as might be sufficient, and so upon gospel terms applicable to all mankind, and every individual man in the whole world.

To unfold this truth aright, I shall briefly present two things to your consideration:

1. A price may be said to be sufficient, either absolutely or conditionally. A price is then absolutely sufficient, when there is nothing more required to the participation of the benefit but only the payment of the money; and thus we are not to conceive of God's ordination, that Christ's death should become an actual propitiation without any other intervenient act on our part. He died not in this sense for any, much less for all. When, therefore, we say God would that Christ should lay down a price sufficient, and so applicable to every man, it is to be understood in a conditional way, upon the terms of faith and repentance.

And hence it is, that though Christ dying suffered that punishment which was designed to be satisfactory for the sins of every man, yet God doth justly inflict the punishment upon the persons of all them who are not by faith partakers of Christ's death, because it was intended to satisfy for them only upon condition of believing.

2. Know further, that though God intends Christ's

\* Carthus. Serra in loc.

† Sanguis effusus super terram non descendit ad inferos.—*Bern. in Cant. Serm. 75.*

propitiation conditionally applicable, *acquē*, as well to every as any man, yet he did not *ex aquo*, equally intend it for every man. It is one thing to say, He is a propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world, and another thing to say, He is a propitiation as fully for the sins of the whole world as he is for ours. It is observable in Scripture that some places speak of Christ laying down his life for his sheep, John x. 15, and giving himself for his Church, Ephes. v. 25, and others of Christ's dying for all, and tasting death for every one. In one place he is called the Saviour of the body, ver. 23, and in another, the Saviour of the world, John iv. 14. Nor will it be hard to reconcile these, if we distinguish of a general and a special intention in God, that the fruit of his *φιλανθρωπία*, love to mankind, this of his *ευδοκία*, good will to some particular persons. By the former, he intends Christ's propitiation applicable to all; by the latter, he decreeth it to be actually applied to some. According to this it is that St Ambrose saith,\* Christ suffered generally for all, and yet specially for some; and Peter Lombard,† Christ offered himself on the altar of the cross for all, as to the sufficiency of the price; for the elect only, as to efficacy, because he effects salvation only for them that are predestinated. Suitably herennto it is that divines conceive a double covenant to be intimated in Scripture—the one universal and conditional, the other special and absolute; the one made with all, and every man, upon these terms, 'Whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish,' John iii. 16; the other made with Christ concerning a seed which he should see upon making his soul an offering for sin, Isa. liii. 10, to whom he promiseth not only salvation by Christ upon condition of believing, but the writing his law in their hearts, Heb. x. 16, whereby they are enabled to perform the condition, and so infallibly partake of that salvation. By all which, it appeareth that notwithstanding God's special affection, and decree of election whereby he hath purposed this propitiation shall be actually conferred upon some, we may truly assert, God hath a general love whereby he hath ordained the death of Christ an universal remedy applicable to every man as a propitiation for his sins, if he believe and repent. And hence it is that this propitiation, as it is applicable, so it is annunciable to every man. Indeed, as God hath not intended it should be actually applied, so neither that it should be so much as actually revealed to many men; but yet it is, as applicable, so annunciable, both by virtue of the general covenant God hath made with all, and that general mandate he hath given to his ministers

\* Christus passus est pro omnibus; pro nobis tamen specialiter passus est—*Ambros. in Luc.*

† Christus se in arā crucis obtulit pro omnibus, quantum ad pretii sufficientiam; sed pro electis tantum quoad efficaciam, quia predestinatis tantum salutem efficit.—*P. Lumb. dist. secunda. lit. h.*

of preaching the gospel to all, so that if any minister could go through all the parts of the world, and in those parts singly, from man to man, he might not only with a conjectural hope, but with a certain faith, say to him, God hath so loved thee that he gave his only son, that if thou believe in him, thou shalt not perish; and that this is not barely founded upon the innate sufficiency of Christ's death, but the ordination of God, appeareth in that we cannot, may not, say so to any of the fallen angels, for whom yet, as you have already heard, Christ's death is intrinsically sufficient.

And now what should the meditation of this truth afford us, but matter of

1. Admiration at the riches of divine love to all mankind, and which rendereth it so much the more wonderful that while it is conferred on the whole world of men, it is denied to angels. That God should cause his wrath to smoke against those spiritual and noble creatures, the angels, and appoint a propitiation, a ransom for such crawling worms, sinful dust and ashes, as men are, is it not to be admired at? St Ambrose, speaking of these words \* 'The whole earth is full of thy mercy,' puts the question, Why is it not said the heaven as well as the earth? and returneth this answer, Because there are indeed spiritual wickednesses in high places, *sed non ille ad commune jus indulgentia Dei remissionemque pertinent peccatorum*; but the remission of God and propitiation of Christ belongs not to them. Well may we in this consideration take up those words of the psalmist, Psal. viii. 3, quoted by the author to the Hebrews upon this very occasion: Heb. ii. 6, 'Lord, what is man that thou art so mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?'

2. Consolation to all departing souls. It is an excellent saying of Leo,‡ The effusion of Christ's blood is so rich and available, that if the whole multitude of captive sinners would believe in their Redeemer, not one should be detained in the tyrant's chains. Who art thou then that sayest, Christ died not for thee, and will not be a propitiation for thy sins? When the door is open by God, why should it be shut by thee? When God is ready to receive thee, why shouldst thou reject Christ, and cast away thyself? View the text well, and tell me if *the whole world* do not include thee? Surely *omne totum continet suas partes, omnis species sua individua*, every species includeth its individuals, every whole its parts. It is both Calvin's and Gualter's‡ note upon the word *world*, that it is so often repeated, *ne aliquem à Christi merito exclusum putaremus*; so Gualter, that we should not think any one excepted, *ne quis omnino arceri se putet, modo fidei viam teneat*; so Calvin, lest any one should think himself excluded

\* Ambros. in Ps. cxviii.

† Effusio pro injustis sanguinis justī tam potens est, &c.—*Leo de pass.* Serm. xii. c. 4.

‡ Vide Gualt. Calv. in loc.



if he walk in the path of believing. Believe it, never any missed of propitiation for want of merit in Christ, but of faith in themselves. Why should I give myself over when my Physician doth not? So long as I am one of the whole world, and my particular sins are not so great as the sins of the whole world, I will not cast away all hopes of propitiation.

3. Caution, that we do not hence presume of a propitiation without application. St John saith, 'He is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world;' but we cannot infer, he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; therefore he will be for ours though we live as we list. Alas, brethren! you have already heard this propitiation; as it is universal, so it is conditional; *habet quidem in se ut omnibus prosit, sed si non bibitur non medetur*,\* this cup of salvation hath that in it which can benefit all; but if no drinking of it, no healing by it. If thou dost not believe, saith St Ambrose,† Christ did not descend for thee, nor die for thee, to wit, so as effectually to save thee; and in another place,‡ more aptly to our present purpose, if any one doth not believe, he defraudeth himself of that benefit which is so general. Indeed, by reason of this condition it falls out, that though Christ be a propitiation for the sins

\* Prosp. ad Vincent. object. prim.

† Ambros. de fide ad Grat. l. iv. c. 1.

‡ Id. in Ps. cxviii. Oct. 5.

of the whole world; yet it is not the whole world, no nor the greater, no nor an equal part of the world, but a third, a fourth part, a remnant, a little flock, partake of this propitiation; and therefore we have a great deal of reason to fear and tremble lest we miscarry, and have no share in this propitiation, which is so universal.

4. Exhortation. That since Christ is a propitiation for the whole world, we labour to make sure our own share in this universal good. It had been little comfort to St John that he could say Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, if he could not have said, he is the propitiation for our sins. That known saying is in this case too often verified, *latet dolus in universalibus*, men deceive themselves whilst they rest in generalities. Content not thyself to know that Christ hath died for the world, but strive to be assured that thou shalt be saved by his death. It will be a sad trouble at that day for thee to think, I had a price in my hand, but I made no use of it; I might have obtained propitiation by Christ, but I neglected it; there was a remedy prepared, but I contemned it. And, therefore, let our great care be to gain an interest in assurance of this propitiation to our own souls, that what it is in itself, it may be to us; and it may be for our sins efficiently, what it is sufficiently not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

### SERMON XXIII.

*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, as he walked.*—1 JOHN II. 3-6.

**A**MONG the many excellencies of this epistle, this is one, that it is a sacred and spiritual touchstone; for as a touchstone discovereth metals, so doth this both doctrines and persons. By a touchstone, the goldsmith discerneth what is right and what is counterfeit; and by this epistle we may know truth from error, and sincerity from hypocrisy. Would we be informed concerning positions, what are orthodox, and what heterodox; concerning professors who are sound, and who are rotten, we need go no further than this book. If you cast your eyes on the latter end of this, and the beginning of the fourth and fifth chapters, you may learn what is the true Christian religion, namely, to 'believe Jesus to be the Christ,' that 'Christ is come in the flesh,' and that he is 'the Son of God.' If you peruse every chapter throughout the epistle, you shall find those marks whereby you may know who are true Christians. This is that which more especially is observable in this scripture, the chief scope whereof is to describe a true and sincere Christian by his conformity to Christ in his command and example. 'Hereby we know,' &c.

It is not unfitly taken notice of by the Greek scholiast,\* that these words have a reference to those in ver. 7 of the former chapter, 'If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another.' And, indeed, if we view these verses well, you shall find them a further and fuller explication of that proposition, and that both in the predicate and subject.

The *predicate* of that assertion, 'We have fellowship with one another,' is here explained by two phrases; the one in the third verse, 'We know him;' and the other in the fifth and sixth verses, 'We are,' and 'abide in him.' These being (as it were) the springs of that fellowship, since our communion is founded in our union; and all fellowship is between those who know each other.

The *subject* of that assertion, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light,' is here characterised by two eminent steps of this walk, namely, obedience to, and imitation of, Christ, keeping his commandments, and walking as he walked. By which we see that verified in this part, which I have formerly told you is

\* Cæcum in loc.

the chief design of the whole epistle, to wit, an explication of that proposition as being the message which he heard, and was sent to declare to them to whom he wrote.

In these four verses there are four propositions considerable, two whereof are principal, and two collateral.

The two principal assertions set forth the characters of sincere Christians.

The two collateral refer to the knowledge we have of our Christianity by those characters.

The first of the principal doctrines is asserted, amplified, proved.

Asserted as a thesis in the close of the third verse, 'We know him, if we keep his commandments.'

Amplified by an antithesis in the fourth verse, 'He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar; and the truth is not in him.'

Proved by a strong reason in the beginning of the first, 'Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.'

The second principal doctrine is only propounded by way of position in the sixth verse, yet with a tacit intimation of an opposition, and withal of a probation, as will appear in the handling, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk as he walked.' Besides these, there are two other propositions, which I call collateral, as being appendixes to the former.

The one, that a knowledge of our knowledge of, and interest in, Christ is to be endeavoured.

The other, that an especial means of attaining this knowledge is hereby, to wit, by keeping his commandments, and walking after his footsteps. And these are couched in the beginning of the third, 'Hereby we know that we know him,' and the end of the fifth verse, 'Hereby we know that we are in him.'

The first assertion, as it is propounded in the end of the third verse, we know, or, according to the Greek, we have known him, ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν, if we keep his commandments, is that which will take our present discourse.

It is a proposition which is true both ways, saving knowledge being both the cause and the effect, the root and the fruit of obedience. On the one hand, keeping the commandments is a means whereby we come to know him, that is to increase our knowledge; and on the other, the saving knowledge of him is a means enabling us to keep his commandments. That of St Paul to the Colossians, chap. i. 9, 10, is very full to this purpose, where he prayeth for them, that they might be 'filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding; that they might walk worthy of him and please him in all things, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' Intending thereby to teach us that we cannot 'walk worthy of the Lord' unless we be 'filled with the knowledge of his will'; and withal, that by being 'fruitful in every good work,' we

should 'increase in the knowledge of God.' Ἐκάτερον γὰρ ἐκατέρου συστατικόν, saith Theophilact \* aptly; one of these being, as it were, constitutive and productive of the other. That as water engendereth ice, and ice water, so doth knowledge beget obedience, and obedience augment knowledge.

1. Would we then know him, let us keep his commandments. 'By thy precepts' (saith David, Ps. cxix. 100), that is, by the observance of thy precepts, 'I get understanding.' 'If any man do my will' (saith our blessed Saviour, John vii. 19), 'he shall know my doctrine.' Βούλει θεόλογος γενέσθαι? τὰς ἐπιτολάς φύλασσε, saith Nazianzen, † Wouldst thou be a divine? do the commandments; for action is (as it were) the basis of contemplation. It is St Gregory's ‡ observation concerning the two disciples, who, whilst Christ talked with them, knew him not, but in performing an act of hospitality towards him, to wit, breaking bread with him, they knew him, that they were enlightened not by hearing him, but by doing divine precepts, *Quisquis ergo vult audita intelligere; festinet ea quæ jam audire potuit, opere implere,* § Who-soever therefore will understand, let him first make haste to do what he heareth.

2. Again, would we keep his commandments, let us know him. These two, knowledge and practice, are necessary attendants the one upon the other. Those two sisters, Leah and Rachel, are fit emblems of contemplation and action; || contemplation like Rachel is beautiful, action like Leah is fruitful. And as those two sisters were married to Jacob, so are these two graces concomitant in every Christian. Those cherubims which the prophet Ezekiel speaketh of are described to have hands under their wings, Ezek. i. 8. The wings (saith St Gregory ¶) are an emblem of knowledge, whereby we fly in our thoughts to heaven, the hands of practice, whereby we do good on earth; and all true Christians, like these cherubims, have hands under their wings; that is, operation attending meditation. This that Father looketh upon as resembled by those two sisters (of whom we read in the Gospel), Martha and Mary, whereof *Una intenta operi, altera contemplationi*, the one was intent upon doing, the other upon hearing. Indeed, these two are not only as two sisters, but as the mother and the daughter, divine knowledge both engaging and enabling to obedience, so as it doth not only follow upon, but flow from it. The true knowledge of divine things is not *otiosa*, but *officiosa*, a loiterer, but a labourer. As her principal object Christ is incarnate, so is she; having eyes of charity, bowels of mercy, hands of bounty, and feet of obedience. Indeed, you may as well

\* Theoph. ibid.

† Greg. Naz. Orat. 29.

‡ Audiendo præcepta Dei illuminati non sunt, faciendo illustrati sunt.

§ Greg. Hom. in Evang. 23.

|| Id. ibid.

¶ Quid per manus nisi activa vita, et quid per pennas nisi contemplativa signatur?—Greg. in Ezek. hom. 3.



sever the beams from the sun, heat from the fire, motion from life, as practice from a right knowledge; to which purpose is that note of Calvin upon the text.\* He admonisheth us that Christian knowledge is not idle, but active, by its efficacious virtue producing obedience; so that they who know him really will, nay, cannot but keep his commandments.

To illustrate this truth the more clearly, I shall briefly resolve these two queries, what it is to know him, and what it is to keep his commandments, whereby we shall learn both, why a right knowledge of Christ enableth to keep the commandments, and what keeping the commandments floweth from this knowledge.

1. The full explication of this knowledge, and its influence upon keeping the commandments, will best appear by considering both the object whereabout it is conversant, and the acts which it puts forth.

(1.) The object of this knowledge is insinuated in that pronoun *him*; and if you ask *whom?* the answer is to be given from the first verse, where we read of the Father and Jesus Christ the advocate. According to this it is that our blessed Saviour maketh the object of saving knowledge to be 'the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,' John xvii. 3. It is not, then, that knowledge we have of God by his works, by his law, but by his gospel, whereof St John here speaketh. So Beza upon the text. *Agitur hic de cognitione Dei in evangelio.* The apostle here speaketh of evangelical knowledge, which must needs engage to obedience, inasmuch as it is a knowledge of the love of God and Christ towards us, and those choice benefits he hath wrought for us; and certainly, he that knoweth how much Christ hath done for his salvation, cannot but be ready to do whatever Christ requireth for his service. Indeed, that natural knowledge we have of him as a creator, carrieth in it an argument of obedience. It is the acknowledgment of the elders, Rev. iv. 11, 'Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, for thou hast created all things.' It being most equal that to him we should return service from whom we receive our being. Yet, further, that legal knowledge we have of him as our lawgiver and judge, is an inducement to obedience, inasmuch as the breach of the law cannot but provoke him to inflict the curse; but still the knowledge we have of God as a father, of Christ as an advocate and propitiator, is both the sweetest and the strongest obligation; nothing being more rational than that our Father, our Redeemer, should be our Lord, and that we should be wholly devoted to him who is so dearly affected to us; especially considering this is the very end of his delivering us out of the hands of our enemies, that we should 'serve before him without fear, in righteousness and holiness all the days of our lives,' Luke i. 75.

(2.) The acts of this knowledge will the better ap-

\* Admonet non otiosam esse Dei notitiam, &c.—*Calv. in loc.*

pear by observing the various acceptations of this word *know*, which may fitly be accommodated to our present purpose. Among others, there are three constructions of this word.

[1.] To *know* is sometimes as much as to *acknowledge*. When we read of a Pharaoh risen in Egypt which 'knew not Joseph,' Exod. i. 8; of God complaining concerning Israel, Hosea ii. 8, that 'she did not know he gave her corn, and wine, and oil;' and again, of Christ's answer to many at the last day, 'I know you not,' Mat. vii. 23, it is plainly manifest that to know is as much as to own, acknowledge. And in this sense that Latin word is used by the poet, *cognoscere* for *agnoscere*:

. . . 'Dominum cognoscite vestrum.'\*

This acceptation is here made use of by Tirinus,† and not unfitly; if we know him, that is, acknowledge him as our Lord and Jesus, and own him as our prince and Saviour. And thus knowing him, we cannot but account ourselves obliged to keep his commandments. It is very observable to this purpose what Christ saith in St John's Gospel concerning his sheep: chap. x. 4, 'They know my voice, and they follow me.' True believers, acknowledging Christ to be their shepherd, and owning it to be his voice which they hear in the Scriptures, follow him by an active conformity to his precepts. It is God's own reasoning in the prophecy of Malachi: chap. i. 6, 'If I be a father, where is my honour? if I be a master, where is my fear?' And therefore Christians acknowledging him to be their Father, their Master, cannot but give up themselves to the honour, fear, and service of him.

[2.] *Γινώσκειν* is sometimes as much as *πιστεύειν*, to *know*, the same with to *believe*. It were easy to multiply instances of this kind, but one may suffice instead of all, where God saith concerning Christ, Isa. liii. 11, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many,' which is no doubt to be construed, by faith in him he shall justify; according to that of St Paul, Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith.' And believing is called *knowing* upon a double account.

First, Partly because knowledge is a necessary ingredient of faith. It is the apostle's assertion concerning himself: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed;' and his question concerning the heathen: Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they believe on him whom they have not heard?' thereby asserting it impossible. And the reason is, because they cannot believe on him whom they have not known. Indeed, faith, formally considered, is an assent, or, if you will, consent; but, fundamentally, it is knowledge. Faith is not a brutish captivity, but a voluntary assent, which cannot be without some measure of knowledge preceding. It is true the knowledge required in faith is not *τοῦ διότι*, of the cause, such as in science; but only *τοῦ ὅτι*, that it is so, upon divine revelation. But whilst it bridleth

\* Ovid.

† *Agnoscendo eum.*—*Tirin.*

curiosity, it also abhorreth ignorance; in which respect St Jerome saith excellently,\* *Quæ simplicitas est nescire quæ credas!* What a folly is it not to know what thou pretendest to believe! And Fulgentius,† *Fides vera quod credit non nescit, etiam si non potest videre quod sperat et credit*, True faith, though it cannot see, yet knoweth what it believeth.

*Secondly.* Partly because faith carrieth in it as much certainty as knowledge. It is the difference between opinion and knowledge, that the one is built only upon probabilities, but the other upon certainties; the one argueth topically, but the other demonstratively. Now, faith is not an opinionative, but a scientific, assent; for, doubtless, since faith is founded upon divine revelation, which is infallible, there must needs be as much certainty and clearness in faith as there can be in any knowledge, though founded upon never so strong demonstration. Upon this account it is that faith is defined by the author to the Hebrews to be an evidence, Heb. xi. 1; and the evangelist's expression is, John vi. 69, 'We believe, and are sure,' to intimate that our believing is not a thinking, but a knowing.

According to this notion of knowledge, St Gregory occasionally speaking of these words expounds them, and giveth this as his reason, *Notitia quippe Dei ad fidem pertinet*,‡ because the knowledge of God is an appendix of faith; and in this sense, if we know him, we will keep his commandments. It is observable that in Scripture obeying is sometimes put for believing; so St Paul, Rom. x. 16, quoting that of the prophet, Isa. liii. 1, 'Who hath believed?' reads it, 'Who hath obeyed our report?' And that obedience is called sometimes 'the obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26. Why this, but to teach us that true faith cannot be severed from, yea, puts upon, obedience? Works without faith are not good works, in which respect faith is wittily called the nest of good works, in which they must be hatched. But withal faith without works is as good as no faith, and therefore is affirmed by St James to be a dead faith, chap. ii. 26; and good works are not unfitly stiled the pulse of faith, by which the state and temper of it is discovered. Believing is sometimes called in Scripture a receiving of Christ, John i. 10; and this receiving is of whole Christ, Christ not only as a priest, to propitiate for our sins, but as a king, to govern us by his laws. In vain doth he trust for salvation by, who yields not subjection to, Christ; and therefore saith St Paul, Col. ii. 6, 'As you have received the Lord Jesus' (by faith), 'so walk in him' (by obedience).

[3.] To *know* sometimes is as much as to have a personal experience:§ 'Whoso knoweth the commandment,' saith the wise man, Eccles. viii. 5, 'shall

know no evil;' so the Hebrew; 'feel no evil;' so our translation appositely, *know* being the same there with *feel*. When St Paul saith of Christ, 1 Cor. v. 21, he 'knew no sin,' he is to be understood in this sense, that he did not experience any sin in himself. In this acceptance Beza construeth that of St Paul, Philip. iii. 10, where he professeth to 'account all things loss' that he might 'know Christ;' that is, *reipsa sentire*, in very deed to feel a savour and relish of Christ. And according to this notion, Œcumenius understands this knowledge of him in my text to be as it were a communion and communion with him. Eliphaz hath a phrase very proper to this purpose: Job xxii. 22, 'Acquaint thyself with him.' Those with whom we are acquainted are such of whom we have had trial and experience, and thus to know Christ is to have a sweet intimacy between Christ and our souls; to know him not only as revealed to us, but in us; as preached to our ears, but as dwelling in our hearts. And now whosoever thus knoweth him, cannot but keep his commandments. The reason whereof appeareth in the fore-mentioned text, where the knowledge of Christ and the virtue of Christ are joined together. As the woman that touched Christ received virtue from him to cure her disease, so whosoever hath an experimental knowledge of Christ cannot but experience the virtue of Christ, to wit, of his death for mortification, of his rising for vivification, both which make up sanctification, whereby we keep the commandments. And further, look as they who are inwardly acquainted each with other, are joined together in a firm league of amity, whereby it is that they will and nill the same things; so is it with those who are acquainted with Christ, they will what he wills, and nill what he nills, and endeavour wholly to conform themselves to his precepts. To sum it up, then, if you would know what this meaneth, *to know him*, I answer, it is to know God and Christ as revealed in the gospel, and that so as to own him, to believe in him, and to have an experimental acquaintance with him; and thus knowing him, we cannot but keep his commandments.

2. You have beheld the mother, knowledge, be pleased now to take a view of the daughter, obedience, as it is expressed in those words, 'if we keep his commandments,' wherein each word is emphatical, and deserveth our due consideration. Here are three words, *commandment*, *his*, and *keep*; accordingly, here are three particulars, the object, the subject, the act; of each briefly.

(1.) *Commandments*. That is the object. Aretius upon the Romans\* critically observeth, that *γένος* and *εἶδος* differ as the *genus* and the *species*, law taking in all sorts of precepts, but *commands* specially respect ing those which are affirmative. And it is that which we may not unfitly here take notice of, so much the rather considering what is said at the first verse of this chapter. There it is that you *sin not*, avoid what is

\* Aret. in Rom. vii. 12.

\* Hier. contra Lucifer. † Fulgent. contr. Arrian.

‡ Greg. M. in Evang. hom. xxii. lib. ii.

§ Sciendi seu cognoscendi sermo, in Scripturâ divinâ præcipuè, non semper notitiam manifestat, nisi experimentum alicujus rei habere, &c.—*Didym. in loc.*



forbidden; here it is *keep his commandments*, do what is required. It is not enough to avoid sin, but we must do our duty. As we 'cease to do evil,' so we must 'learn to do well,' Isa. i. 16; as we 'die to sin,' so we must 'live to righteousness,' 1 Peter ii. 24; finally, as we 'abhor that which is evil,' so we must 'cleave to that which is good,' Rom. xii. 7. Pharisaical religion lieth chiefly in negatives: 'God, I thank thee I am no extortioner,' Mat. xxv. 30; but Christian religion obligeth to affirmatives as well as negatives. As well the idle and unprofitable servant as the wasteful prodigal steward is condemned, Luke xvi. 3; and the barren vine is in danger of being plucked up as well as the wild. Indeed, he that abstaineth from sinful actions is not far from the kingdom, but it is he that doth well shall obtain the kingdom.\* The first step is *not to sin*, to leave off those evils we have done; but the next is to *do the good* we have left undone, and so keep his commandments.

(2.) *His.* Jesus Christ the righteous hath not only published promises, but given precepts; and as he proposeth comforts to stablish our confidence, so he imposeth duties which require our performance, in which regard it is that we read elsewhere of 'the law of Christ,' Gal. vi. 2, and here of his commandments. If it be further inquired what these commandments are, I answer, they are no other for substance than those which are contained in those ten words which are usually called the moral law. And therefore we find our blessed Saviour in that sermon of his upon the mount, Mat. v. 6, 7, expounding the precepts, and pressing the practice of the law upon his disciples and the people. Thus, as the law, in respect of our inability of exact observance, and the rigidity of its curse upon non-observance, driveth us to Christ for comfort in the promises, so Christ sendeth us back to the law, as a rule still to guide us in the course of our conversations, by a sincere endeavour to observe its precepts; and these are here called his commandments.

(3.) *Keep.* The act which every Christian is to perform, and which this knowledge whereof my text speaketh enableth to, is keeping. It is a word of a large extent, and may have a double reference: the one to the heart, the other to the life. When Solomon giveth it in charge to his son, Prov. iii. 1, 'Let thine heart keep my commandments,' he meaneth no doubt a due pondering, and a stedfast remembering of those precepts he gave him. Thus David kept when he saith, Ps. cxix. 11, he 'hid God's word in his heart;' and the metaphors both of keeping and hiding refer to a treasure, it being our duty as carefully to keep in mind the commandments of God and Christ, as a covetous mammonist is to keep his gold and silver in his chest. But that which we are here to understand is the keeping of Christ's commandments in our life. Apposite to this purpose is that note of

\* Vide Chrysost. hom. de Virtut. et Vit.

St Austin upon those words of our Saviour, John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them:' *Qui habet in memoriâ et servat in vitâ, qui habet in sermonibus et servat in moribus, qui habet audiendo et servat faciendo*, He that hath them in mind, and keepeth them in life; he that hath them at his tongue's end, and keepeth them at his fingers' end; he that hath them by hearing, and keepeth them by doing. So that in this construction this metaphor of keeping refers to a way, which he is said to keep who constantly walketh in it. And so *keeping* is the same with *obeying*; and the import of these words, 'We know him if we keep his commandments,' is, where there is a true faith in Christ, there will be a sincere obedience to his precepts.

And that you may see wherein the sincerity of this obedience consists, which is the fruit of this knowledge, be pleased to observe it briefly, and yet fully, in these two particulars:

1. The sincere keeping his commandments, is a keeping them because they are his. It is one thing to do what Christ commands, and another to do it because he commands it. Pagans that have no knowledge of, do many things which are required by Christ, but they cannot do them *because* he requireth them. Hypocrites, that have no saving knowledge of Christ, perform many things which he prescribeth, but it is only out of self-respects; and if a man do that which Christ commands, and yet know not that he commands it, or if he knows it to be his command, and do it not because it is commanded by him, it is not such an obedience as ariseth from a right knowledge of him. It is very observable concerning David, that when he prayeth so earnestly, Ps. cxix. 4, 5, 'Oh that my ways were so directed that I might keep thy statutes,' he premiseth this as the reason, 'Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently,' thereby intimating that the ground of his obedience to God's precepts was the stamp of divine authority enjoining him. To this purpose it is that he saith in that same psalm, ver. 94, 'I have sought thy precepts,' thereby implying that that which he sought in his obedience, was the fulfilling of God's will. Indeed, that only and properly is obedience which is done *intuitu voluntatis divinae*, with a respect to and eye upon divine will. As that is only a divine faith which believeth a truth, not because of human reason but divine revelation, so that only is a true obedience which conformeth to the command, not because it may consist with any self-ends, but because it carrieth in it an impression of Christ's authority.

2. And further, this sincere keeping of the commandment is a keeping not some, but many, nay, all; so as whatsoever appeareth to be required by him, is conformed to by us. Indeed, this necessarily followeth upon the former; for *quicquid propter Deum fit aequaliter fit*, he that doth anything at another's prescript, upon this account, that it is prescribed by him, will

not neglect to do whatsoever he prescribeth, there being the same reason of obeying him in all as in any. Hence it is that as our faith, eyeing divine revelation, believeth whatsoever is revealed, how cross soever it may be to our reason; so obedience, eyeing divine prescription, fulfilleth whatsoever is required, though never so contrary to our affections. And thus this keeping the commandments is an universal obedience.

(1.) In respect of the extent, which is *ad totum preceptum*, to every command.

[1.] As well duties of the first as of the second, and the second as of the first table; piety without equity is but hypocrisy, and equity without piety is but morality; both together is Christianity. A Pharisee may be zealous for devotion, and yet a devourer of widows' houses; an heathen may be exact in his dealings towards man, whilst yet he is no worshipper of God; but a true Christian keepeth a good conscience both towards God and man.

[2.] As well the spiritual as the external part of commands. In our keeping the commandments it is not enough to approve ourselves to men, who only observe our actions, but to God and Christ, who searcheth the hearts, and vieweth our dispositions. Hence it is that true obedience is a keeping of all the commandments, not only as to the matter, but the manner and the end; a performing those duties which are required, with suitable affections and a single intention.

(2.) In respect of the duration, which is *per totam vitam*, to the end of our days. It is said of Christ that he was 'obedient to the death,' Philip. ii. 8; and one interpretation\* of that is 'to his dying day.' So must they who know Christ be obedient to him throughout the whole course of their lives. St Austin explaineth the phrase of *keeping*, not only by *doing* but *persevering*; † and indeed that is sometimes the notion of the phrase; so when St Paul saith, 2 Tim. iv. 5, 'I have kept the faith,' he meaneth, no doubt, his constancy in the profession of the faith; and where Christ saith, Rev. iii. 10, 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,' he intends a perseverance in their obedience to Christ's word, notwithstanding persecution. And thus to keep Christ's commandments, as well by suffering as doing, to lose anything rather than not keep them, and patiently to continue in well-doing though we may suffer ill, is that obedience which a right knowledge of Christ produceth.

I cannot leave this without annexing one caution, that this universal obedience is not to be understood in respect of an exact execution, but a cordial endeavour. Indeed the punctual observation of the commandments is in this life impossible; not absolutely and in itself, for God doth not command such things as are in themselves impossible to be done; but respectively and accidentally, because we are by the fall disabled, and that ability we once had is not for the

\* Vide Beza ib.

† Aug. in John xiv.

present perfectly restored. The truth is, in the best there is both *defectus privans* and *affectus obstands*, a defect of that measure of grace which should strengthen to full obedience; and besides a continual lusting of the flesh against the spirit, conflict between sin and grace, whereby it is that grace cannot perfectly produce its acts. Hence it is that as we cannot keep them collectively, so neither distributively; we cannot observe all; no, nor any so perfectly in every tittle as that there should be no deviation. But still there may be a sincere purpose of heart inclining us to observe all, whereby it is that as hypocrites may be said to break the commandments when they keep them, because with the observance of the outward act, there is no concurrence of the mind's delight, so that the good they do they would not do; so true Christians may (in a qualified sense) be said to keep the commandments when they break them, because when they fail in the outward act, they have an habitual purpose in their regenerate part to perform, and so the evil they do they would not. Nor is this kind of obedience unfitly called universal, because it has respect to every command; nor doth it suffer a man willingly to allow himself in the breach of any of the precepts.

To sum it up, there is a knowledge of God and Christ which is true and perfect, and there is a knowledge which is true but imperfect; the perfect knowledge is that which we shall have in that other life, which is said to be perfect, not in respect of *comprehension*, since it is impossible that our finite understandings should fully comprehend an infinite object,\* but in regard of *apprehension*, because it shall be the fullest degree of apprehensive knowledge, which human nature is capable of. But the knowledge which we have in this life is imperfect, according to that of the apostle: 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 'We know in part;' and according to this different knowledge, so is our keeping the commandments, since the effect cannot exceed the energy of the cause; when therefore our knowledge shall be perfect, our obedience shall be complete. But in the meantime, as our knowing Christ, so our keeping his commandments is defective, though withal it is sincere, and as to the intention illimited; the soul that rightly knoweth Christ, being ready to observe, and resolved to do whatsoever Christ revealeth as his will, and imposeth as a command.

What now remaineth, but that every one of us endeavour to express the truth of our knowledge of Christ by our obedience? We have all of us, my brethren, heard much and often of Christ, but have we yet learned to know him? We, many of us, are able to speak much of, but have we any spiritual acquaintance with, Christ? If so, where is our obedience to his commands? True knowledge is such as may not only be heard but seen. Sheep (saith the moral philosopher) do not bring their fodder to their shepherds and shew them how much they have eaten,

\* Vide Zanch. in loc.



but they inwardly digest, and outwardly shew it by the goodness and quantity of the fleece upon their backs. If we will shew the reality of knowledge in our hearts, it must be by the fleece of holiness in our lives. Indeed, how can it be otherwise, but that he who knoweth Christ, the authority he hath over him, the mercy he hath wrought for him, and accordingly experienceth any communion with him, and dependeth for salvation on him, should account himself infinitely obliged to the observance of whatsoever is enjoined by him? 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' is the voice of Saul when Christ is pleased to discover himself to him, Acts ix. 5, 6. 'They that know thy name,' saith the psalmist of God, Psal. ix. 9, 11, 'will put

their trust in thee.' They that know thy nature, oh, blessed Jesus, will yield obedience to thee. Indeed, we many of us so know Christ, as we are willing to trust in him, but yet not to serve him; believe his promises of mercy we do, observe his commands of duty we will not; but in vain is that confidence which is not attended with obedience; and, therefore, let our conscientious keeping the precepts give evidence of our faith in, our knowledge of, Christ; so shall we be found real Christians. And if our knowledge of Christ here enable us to keep his commandments, our keeping the commandments shall bring us to the knowledge of Christ hereafter, when we shall behold him face to face in glory for ever. Amen.

### SERMON XXIV.

*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.*—1 JOHN II. 4, and part of the 5th.

KNOWLEDGE is very amiable in the eyes of all rational men, since as the understanding is that faculty which ennobleth man, so knowledge is that excellency which ennobleth the understanding; of all knowledge, none more precious than that of God and of Christ. Other knowledge may ennoble, but this spiritualizeth the mind; other knowledge is needful for us as men, but this concerneth us as Christians. Indeed, to use Lactantius his expression,\* this is that knowledge without which he that seeth is blind, heareth is deaf, speaketh is dumb; and I add, liveth is dead. So much our blessed Saviour implieth when he saith, John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.'

But as all shining glass is not crystal, nor all light-some apparitions stars, so neither is all knowledge of God and Christ that which entitleth to life eternal. And therefore our apostle is here pleased to prevent deceit, by giving us its most genuine character, drawn from its inseparable attendant, yea, necessary effect, to wit, obedience to the commandments, the wilful neglect whereof argueth the absence of this knowledge; for 'he that saith I know him, and keepeth not,' &c.

The first principal proposition, as it is *asserted*, hath been already discussed. That which next followeth in order is the antithesis by which it is *illustrated*—a sentence equivalently the same with the former; and as Ferus † hath observed, that we may see it did not fall from him rashly; yea, withal *vehementiæ gratia*, as Gualter ‡ notes, that it might make the deeper impression on us, he expresseth it again by its contrary.

In which words there are two things to be considered:

\* Quem qui non cognoscit, licet viderit, cæcus is licet audiat, surdus; licet loquatur, clinguis.—*Lact. de vero cultu*, l. vi. c. 9.

† Fer. in loc.

‡ Gualt. *ibid.*

an implicit accusation, an explicit aggravation. The one in these words, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments;' the other in these, 'is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' According to which Zanchy\* layeth down two positions: the one, that there were many in St John's time, yea, always would be in the church, who say they know Christ and keep not his commandments; and the other that all such do most impudently lie.

1. These words, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments,' plainly intimate that there are some who keep not Christ's commandments, and yet say they know them. Parallel to this is that of St Paul to Titus, chap. i. 16, where he speaketh of some who 'Profess they know God, and in works deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.' They whom both these apostles may most probably be supposed to intend, were the Gnostics; this phrase of knowing so fitly answering that name, which out of an arrogant self-conceit they gave to themselves, whilst they were men of flagitious lives and licentious conversations, calling themselves Gnostics, and accounting themselves the only knowing men in the matters of religion.

Nor is it only true of these heretics, but is likewise verified of all hypocrites, who, whilst they indulge to their lusts, and live in wilful violation of the precepts, pretend to great measure of illumination with divine knowledge. In which respect Aretius † saith, this is *vera nota simulatorum filiorum Dei*, a true mark of bastard children and false saints. The sins of the people of Israel were so great, and their transgressions heinous, that God bids his prophet to 'lift up his voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud against them;' and yet they 'seek God daily, and delight to know his way,' Isa. lviii. 1, 2. The same people are charged

\* Zanch. in loc.

† Aret. in loc.

by God for transgressing his covenant, and trespassing against his laws, Hosea viii. 1, 2; and yet the prophet saith of them presently after, 'They cry to the Lord my God, We know thee,' as if they were familiar with, and had an especial interest in, him. Our blessed Saviour in the Gospel speaketh not of a few, but many, who shall at the last day take acquaintance of him, as if they had long known him, Mat. vii. 22, 23; for they shall say, 'Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done wonderful works?' whom yet he calls workers of iniquity. Whence it appeareth that wicked men may not only say it to others by profession, but within themselves by their opinion; yea, may not only live but die in this self-delusion, that they know Christ, and so have an interest in him, whilst yet they work iniquity. It was the observation of Calvin\* in his time, that many hypocrites, men of loose lives, did *fidei titulo superbire*, pride up themselves in the title of believer, and made large profession of Christianity; nor is it less observable in the seeming saints of this age. On the one hand their actions are manifestly contrary to those commands of self-denial and humility, loyalty and equity, meekness and patience, mercy and charity, in giving and forgiving, which Christ hath imposed on all those that will come after him; and yet on the other hand, whilst their hands are leaden, their tongues are gilded, they say they know God, yea, they are intimate with him: they talk much of the new birth, the work of grace, having an interest in Christ, and the like.

2. You see the truth of the charge, now view the heinousness of the fault, He that saith this, 'is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' Indeed, both ways it is an untruth, and he that saith it deserveth to be branded for a liar. To say we keep his commandments, when we do not know him, is a lie; since, if the eye be blind, it is impossible the foot should make straight steps. God never turneth any from the power of Satan to himself, whom he doth not first turn from darkness to light, Acts xxvi. 18. Knowledge is the soul's rudder, according to which its course is steered, the Christian traveller's *Mercury*, pointing him the right way; nor can we give up ourselves in obedience to his precepts whom we know not as our Lord, and of whose command we are ignorant. And as it is true on the one, so on the other hand. To say we know him and not to keep his commandments is a lie, nor can there be truth in those who say it. It was well spoken by the philosopher, *ἀνεὺ ἀρετῆς Θεός ἄνομα μόνον*, without virtue, God is but an empty name; and it is as true, without obedience, all knowledge of God and Christ is but an empty notion, a lying vanity.

For the further illustrating of this, it will not be amiss to take notice of a threefold lie, to wit, verbal, doctrinal, practical; told, taught, acted. A verbal lie is when we tell a false tale, raise an untrue report, and

\* Calvin in loc.

so become lying witnesses, and our lips lying lips. A doctrinal lie is when men assert that to be God's word which is their own fancy, and vent their false opinions under the notion of sublime verities; to believe these lies God threatens to give up those who 'receive not the truth in the love of it,' 2 Thes. ii. 12. Finally, a practical lie is when a man's actions do not correspond to his profession, in which respect he is justly called a liar whose actions are breaches of the precepts, and yet his pretences are large of knowing Christ, since, as Lorinus\* well noteth, such an one *Non prastat quod scit, quod profitetur, quod dicit, quod promittit*, he performeth not according to what he knoweth, professeth, saith, nay, promiseth; and so there is no truth, not only of veracity but fidelity, in him (as that author observeth), whilst he fulfilleth not that which in his baptism he promised, and by his profession he is obliged to, the keeping the commandments.

But it may be here objected that there are many who do know Christ, and that not only in a weak but great measure, since they are able to discourse excellently of the mysteries of salvation, the things of God and Christ, whose lives are yet dissonant to the rule of Christianity; and if so, surely when such say they know Christ, they do not lie, though they do not keep his commandments.

The answer to which objection will be easily made by distinguishing of a double knowledge of Christ, to wit, *in formâ* and *formalis*, literal and spiritual, notional and practical, speculative and active. Look as there is in a man *caro et spiritus*, flesh and spirit, a body and a soul; in a tree *cortex et succus*, the rind or bark, and the sap or juice; so is there in Christian knowledge. He whose knowledge is only literal hath but the flesh, the body, the bark, the rind of knowledge; only he whose knowledge is spiritual hath the spirit, the soul, the sap, the juice of knowledge.

These two knowledges, though they agree in the object, whereabouts they are conversant, yet are they very much different.

(1.) In their efficient. For whereas a speculative knowledge of Christ may be in a great measure acquired by industry in reading, and is at most but a fruit of common illumination, the active knowledge is only obtained by prayer, and is a fruit of special sanctification.

(2.) In their subject. For whereas that is only seated in the understanding, this hath an impression upon the will, and is *sapida scientia*, a knowledge with a savour and relish of the sweetness of Christ; that only floateth in the brain, but this sinketh down into the heart; that spins fine cobwebs in the head, this maketh the heart beat with a true pulse towards heaven.

(3.) Finally, in their effect; that puffeth up with self-conceit, this abaseth a man in his own apprehen-

\* Lor. in loc.



sion; that only sits upon the lip, but this is to be felt at the fingers' end; that indeed may be, nay, many times is, alone, but this is ever attended with obedience. Now of this knowledge it is that St John here speaketh, and 'he that saith he thus knoweth Christ, not keeping his commandments, is a liar.'

The truth is, whereas this knowledge is *licet vera, tamen imperfecta*, though true, yet defective, that is *nec vera nec perfecta*, not perfect nor yet true, according to a theological notion. It is only *μὲν δυνατὸς τῆς γνώσεως*, as the apostle's expression is: Rom. ii. 20, 'A form of knowledge, not the power;' a shadow, not the substance; and is not the true, because not the good knowledge of God.\* Since, as the psalmist saith, 'A good understanding have they that do his commandments.' Indeed, as works without knowledge are no good works, so knowledge without works is no good knowledge, Ps. cxix. 66, cxi. 10.† He that saith he believeth in Christ and liveth not accordingly, believe him not; he sheweth his hypocrisy, not his faith, who maketh show of faith without obedience. And as it is vain glory to boast of our keeping the commandments, so it is in vain to boast of knowledge without keeping the commandments. In which respect that of St Gregory ‡ is very apposite, when there is time and place and ability of doing good, *Tantum quis operatur, quantum Deum noverit; tantum se nosse Deum indicat, quantum pro Deo bona operatur*. Look how much knowledge, so much doing; and so much as a man doth, for so much he knoweth of God, and no more.

This will yet the more fully appear if we observe the Scripture language, which, as it were, defineth that knowledge of God by obedience, and denieth it to them who (though they be not ignorant) are disobedient.

That expression which the prophet Jeremiah bringeth in God speaking to Shallum concerning his father, Jer. xxii. 16, is very observable to this purpose: 'He judged the poor and needy: was not this to know me? saith the Lord.' And why is righteous judgment a knowing the Lord, but because it was a fulfilling of his command! Upon this account it is that these words of the same prophet, 'They shall not teach one another, saying, know the Lord,' are read by the Chaldee, saying, 'fear the Lord,' which the wise man joineth with keeping his commandments. And those of the prophet Hosca, chap. iv. 2, 'There is no knowledge of God in the land,' are rendered by the Chaldee, 'There is none that walketh in the fear of the Lord.' Hence it is that the sons of Eli, though priests, are said to be 'sons of Belial, which know not the Lord God,' 1 Sam. ii. 12, where the one phrase is expounded by the other, because sons of Belial that would not stoop to the yoke of obedience, therefore branded as guilty of ignorance. Yet more clearly God saith by

his prophet Jeremiah, chap. ii. 8, 'They that handle the law know me not.' And this is annexed to the reason, because they transgress his law; a strange expression. Handling the law, supposeth knowing it and yet not keeping; they are said not to know even the law which they handle. And in the same prophecy, chap. iv. 22, God complaining of his people of Israel saith, 'My people are foolish, they have not known me; they have no understanding;' and why thus, but because 'to do good they have no knowledge.' Some know that they may know, this is curiosity; some know that they may be known, this is vain glory; but some know that they may do, this is piety. And because the Jews had not the knowledge to do good, they are said to have no knowledge; by all which it appeareth an undeniable truth, that for them who break this commandment, to say they know God and Christ is an odious lie.

To wind up this, David acknowledgeth, 'I said in mine haste, all men are liars;' but St John was not guilty of any such rashness in saying all hypocrites are liars;\* and therefore *Credamus et cedamus veritati, nosque fateamur esse mendaces*. In a sense of our hypocrisy let us assent to this verity, acknowledging ourselves to be liars; nor let us any longer believe a lie,† and so cheat ourselves into hell. Do not think a few barren notions, dry sapless opinions, airy frothy speculations to be a saving knowledge. Let not (saith St Austin) thy foolish heart deceive thee by imagining thyself to know God, whilst thy faith is a dead faith without works. Who would freight his ship with such drossy ore, or stay for that gale which cannot waft him to heaven? Nay, knowest thou not (O man) that all such knowledge will only serve to make thy *mittimus* to hell, and aggravate, as thy sin, so thy torment, in that day when all naked empty knowledge shall vanish away? 'Where will be the scribes? where the disputers? where the wise?' Shalt thou not then have cause to cry out with the poet, *Cur aliquid vidi?* or with Job, *Quare misero lux data est?* Woe is me that ever I knew anything of God or Christ. Oh that I had been born a Pagan, an idiot, and never so much as heard the sound of the gospel! for then would my condemnation have been less. In a word, what shame will at that day sit upon thy face, when thou shalt be found before God, angels, and men, a liar; and he whom thou sayest thou knowest shall say to thee, I know thee not?

Be wise therefore in time, and learn what it is to know Christ; take heed there be not a worm of disobedience in the tree of thy knowledge. Let it not suffice thee to have a great, but labour for a 'good understanding.' Ever remember that knowledge is as the means, and obedience as the end; and therefore all knowledge is vain which doth not tend to, and end

\* *Lor. in loc.*

† *Nequaquam mens fallat et se existimet Deum cognoscere, &c.—Aug. de fide et oper. c. xii.*

\* *Vide Menoch. in loc.* † *Vide Zanch. in loc.*

† *Greg. in Ezek. hom. xxii, lib. ii.*

in, obedience. And so much for the antithesis, by which the thesis is illustrated. Proceed we to the

Last particular in this first proposition, namely, the argument by which it is proved, laid down in these words, 'Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.' Calvin,\* indeed, conceiveth these words to be annexed as a description of obedience, so that if we would know what it is to keep the commandments, the answer is, It is to have the love of God perfected in us; to this purpose is it that Moses saith, Deut. xiv. 12, 'What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to love him?' And Christ summeth up all the commandments in those two precepts, of love towards God and our neighbour, Mat. xxii. 38, 39. Yea, St Paul saith expressly, That 'love is the fulfilling of the law,' not only *effectivè*, because it enableth us to keep it; but *reductivè*, because the whole law is reducible to that of love.†

But though this construction be true, yet I conceive it is not so genuine and congruous to the apostle's scope. And therefore I rather look upon these words as a confirmation of the preceding clause, he that knoweth God will keep his commandments, because he that knoweth him loveth him, and he that loveth him cannot but keep his commandments. The strength of this argument will the better appear if we put it into a syllogism, which we may take briefly thus,

The love of God is perfected in all, and only those, who keep his word;

In whomsoever there is a right knowledge of God, the love of God is perfected; therefore

Whosoever knoweth God aright will keep his word.

And now, according to this interpretation, here are two positions to be insisted on. The one whereof is the *minor*, the other the *major* in the syllogism; the one tacitly intimated, and the other positively expressed.

1. That which is here implied is, that where there is a knowledge there is also the love of God and Christ. The love of God may admit of a double reference, either *Charitas quæ amat* or *quæ amatur*, actively, the love whereby God doth love; or passively, the love whereby he is beloved. Illyricus understandeth the former,‡ and no doubt it is a truth that God's love is fixed on him who keepeth his word. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them,' saith Christ, 'my Father will love him,' John xiv. 21. Yea, whereas God vouchsafeth a general love to all men, he hath a more special favour to obedient persons. But if we thus understand the love of God in this place, the phrase of *perfected* will sound very harsh; since there is nothing in God, but it is absolutely and infinitely perfect; and therefore I reject it.

More generally and probably expositors here understand that love which we have to God; and so it is an undoubted truth, they who know him cannot but

love him. The truth is, therefore, divine knowledge is effective, because it is affective; it commands our actions, because it commands our affections; and if we know him we keep his commandments, because, if we know him, we love him. It is a rule among the Hebrews, that *verba notitiæ connotant affectus*, the phrase of knowing noteth such an act of the understanding as carrieth the affections along with it. And indeed, it is impossible but the affections should be carried on toward the object when it is rightly known. It is a saying of St Austin,\* *Qui vult habere notitiam Dei, amet*, He that will know God must love him, since love causeth acquaintance; and it is as true, *Qui vult habere amorem Dei, noscat*, He that will love God let him know him. The necessary connection between these two appeareth upon a double ground.

(1.) The one in respect of God's nature, which is good, and goodness itself. The proper object of love is good, and it is impossible, *Ut quis bonum cognitum non amet*, that good known should not be beloved.† Be a thing never so good, if the goodness of it be not known to us, it cannot be loved by us; and if our understandings are fully and clearly convinced of its goodness, it cannot but draw our love towards it. Now God is good, the chief good, a full, universal, original, good. There is no goodness in any creature which is not from him, and after a more eminent way in him; and therefore he that knoweth him, apprehending him infinitely good, cannot but be enamoured with him. Indeed, he that rightly knoweth God, knoweth him to be justice itself, and therefore cannot but fear him; truth itself, and therefore cannot but trust him; goodness itself, and therefore cannot but love him.

(2.) The other in respect of the Spirit's efficacy and operation. *Idem spiritus qui illuminat, inspirat conformem affectum*, the same Spirit is both a Spirit of knowledge and love; like the fire, which giveth both light and heat; and wheresoever the Spirit worketh savingly, there is not only an illumination of the mind but a sanctification throughout, whereby the will is inclined to the love, as well as the judgment enlightened with the knowledge of God. Content not thyself, then, with a sapless, heartless knowledge. Though Christ as God knoweth all persons and things, yet he knoweth not them whom he loveth not; and therefore he saith himself to the workers of iniquity, 'I know you not,' Mat. vii. 23; and though a man (as St Paul specified in his own person), 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 'have all knowledge, yet if he have not charity, it is nothing,' to wit, in God's account; and though it may be profitable to others, yet it can neither be acceptable to God nor beneficial to himself.

2. But further, that which is here expressed, and therefore chiefly to be insisted on, is, that 'whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.'

The subject of this clause, 'whoso keepeth his word,'

\* Calv. in loc. † Illyr. in loc.

† Vide Voss. Pelag. Histor. S. 2.

\* Aug. Man. cap. xx.

† Fer. in loc.



is the same for substance with that in the third verse, 'If we keep his commandments,' and therefore need not be again handled; only the different term of *word* would not be passed by. The word *λόγος* hath especially a double signification, both of which may be here made use of, to wit, *ratio* and *sermo*, reason and speech. According to the former acceptation, Christ's commandments are so called, because in them is set before us *ratio vivendi*, the way to order our conversion aright. And there is nothing in them but what is *rectæ rationi consonum*, most agreeable to right reason. According to this notion, it is that *λογικὴν γάλα* in St Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 2, is rendered by the vulgar Latin, *Lac rationale*, and that for this reason, *quia rationem tradit credendi et rectè vivendi* because the word sets down a just rule, but \* of a right belief, and a good life; and this, by the way, may be a strong obligation to the keeping of what Christ requireth, because he requireth nothing but what is just and reasonable. According to the latter construction, Christ's commandments are so called, because they were first uttered by himself † *vivâ voce* with his own lips, in those sermons which he preached to the people, that especially upon the mount; and it is that which doth both advance the dignity of the commandment, and engage our duty in keeping them. When a king shall not send his herald to proclaim his pleasure, but declare his will himself, and give his commands with his own mouth to the people, ought this not to be received with the greater reverence, and performed with a more ready obedience? These commandments, they were first God's words, for so runs the preface of the moral law: Exod. xx. 1, 'God spake these words and said;' they were afterwards Christ's words, for so begins the sermon on the mount, Mat. v. 2, 'He opened his mouth and spake;' so that whereas all the Scripture is Christ's word, because dictated by his Spirit, the commandments are his word, because immediately spoken by him. And in that it is not *λόγους* but *λόγον*, *words* but *word*; perhaps our apostle might have respect to a particular command given by Christ, namely the law of love, ‡ of which he chiefly treateth in this epistle.

To let this go, pass we on to the predicate of the clause, as being that which here is eminently considerable. In him who keepeth his word, 'verily the love of God is perfected.'

It is that which is true both ways, and so may very well admit of an inversion.

1. On the one hand, in him who loveth God, the keeping of his word is verily perfected. It is the excellency and perfection of obedience when it springs from love. There is a threefold obedience, to wit, *necessitatis*, *cupiditatis*, *charitatis*. Of *compulsion*, when a man obeyeth no further than he is forced;

\* Qu. 'Both'?—Ed.

† Lor. *ibid.*

‡ Ideo *verbum*, quia respicit legem dilectionis.—*Aug. Serm. xxxix. de Trin.*

that is the slave's, whom nothing but fear induceth to the performance of his master's command. Out of *expectation*, when a man obeyeth for the hope of reward; that is the servant's, who serveth his master for his wages. Out of *affection*, when a man obeyeth because he loveth him who commands; that is the son's, whom dear respect to their father engageth to serve him; and this last is the most ingenious and perfect obedience. Indeed, it is love that enlargeth the heart not only to creep but go, nor go but run, nor run but fly, at God's call. It teacheth us to obey, not ἐκ λυπῆς but ψυχῆς, grudgingly but cheerfully; nor is any obedience more free than that to which the love of Christ constraineth. The truth is, *Malus miles qui imperatorem gemens sequitur*,\* he is a base soldier that followeth his general with tears; *malus est ager, cum quo Dominus luctatur*,† that is bad ground which bringeth forth nothing unless it be forced; that obedience is not worthy the name which is only extorted from us; and such is all service where love is absent. In this respect it is that St Ambrose saith,‡ *Plus est diligere quam custodire*, it is more to love God than keep his word, since this may spring from force and fear, but that only from charity. Indeed, this charity is that which perfects all graces and duties, *munda sine charitate omnes virtutes*, said Leo,§ truly all even our best actions are naked if not done in love.

2. And as thus it is our love that perfects our obedience, so withal it is our obedience that perfects our love. 'I will lift up my hands,' saith David, Ps. cxix. 167, 'to thy commandments which I have loved.' It is not the lifting up our eyes to the reading, no, nor of our ears to the hearing, but of our hands to the doing of the commandments, which argueth our love. Hearing may be a means to perfect our knowledge; the ear being the bucket whereby we draw the water of spiritual knowledge out of the well of God's word. Hearing may be a means to perfect our faith, and therefore the apostle saith, Rom. x. 17, 'Faith cometh by hearing.' Both the inchoation and the perfection, the rise and growth of it; but still the keeping of God's word is that which perfects our love: 'Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfect.'

But it may be here objected, What meaneth our apostle to use this phrase of perfecting; nay, to use it in the preterperfect tense? For so the word grammatically is to be rendered: 'In him the love of God hath been perfected.' Can any grace which we have in this life be perfect? The measure of the ark was an imperfect measure, 'two cubit and an half the length, and a cubit and an half the breadth, and a cubit and an half the length|| of it,' Exod. xxxvii. 1. Such is the measure of all our graces in this life. One qualification of Christ's blessed men is, that they

\* Sen. Ep. 107.

‡ Leo. *Quinquages. Ser. x.*

† *Phin. lib. xviii. cap. v.*

|| Qu. 'height'?—Ed.

‡ Ambros. in Ps. cxviii. Ser. xxi.

hunger and thirst after righteousness,' Mat. v. 6, always in desiring, because never in full fruition.

This, then, being true of all graces, is in particular verified of love to God, which shall never be perfected till we come to heaven, and therefore whilst we are here is perfecting, but not perfected.

For the solution, then, of this doubt be pleased,

1. In general, to distinguish, with the fathers, of a double perfection, *Alia absoluta, aliaque competit fragilitati nostræ*; so St Jerome;\* *Alia media, alia plenos numeros habens*; so St Ambrose,† the one absolute and complete, the other limited and comparative, in which sense he that attaineth to great measures of grace, yea, far above others, is said to have grace perfected in him, to wit, such a perfection as man in this life can attain unto. Or again, we may distinguish of a perfection of parts, and of degrees; the one whereof refers to the sincerity, the other to the exactness of grace. We call a child, which hath all the essentials and integrals of a man, a perfect man, though he is not grown up to the strength, and stature, and wisdom of a man. It were easy to instance in many scriptures where *perfect* is put for *upright*, and according to this notion grace may be said to be perfected in them in whom it is found to be sincere.

2. In particular, concerning this grace of love, it will not be amiss to distinguish with Lorinus ‡ of four degrees of perfection.

(1.) To love God is to love him *quantum ipse est diligibilis*, as much as he is worthy to be loved, and so he only loveth himself. Neither *in viâ* nor yet *in patria*, here nor hereafter, can we attain such a degree of love; and the reason is plain, because the love which is worthy of himself must be, like himself, infinite.

(2.) To love God, *Quantum creatura diligere potest*, as much as any creature can possibly love him; and this we shall have in heaven, where we shall know, and knowing love God to the utmost that a finite nature is capable of.

(3.) To love God, *Quantum mortalis potest creatura*, much as a creature clothed with frailty and mortality can, and this is that which all might aspire after, yea, some do attain to, and may be called a perfection of proficiency.

(4.) Lastly, To love God, *Quantum nulla alia res diligitur*, so much as no other thing besides is loved by us; to love God above all, and all in and for God. This is that to which every true Christian attaineth even in this life, and is called a perfection of sincerity.

In this last notion, interpreters generally and rationally expound it here. So among others, Beda and Beza, *Charitatem perfectam videtur apostolus eam intelligere quæ est vera et sincera*, saith the one; § the apostle understandeth by perfect, sincere love. *Τελειῶν, hoc in loco non declarat aliquid perfecte consummare, sed mendacio et simulationi inani opponitur*, saith the

other.\* Perfected doth not here signify to make a thing complete, but is opposed to lying and hypocrisy. In this respect, *ἀληθῶς* seemeth to be a corrective of *τελειώται*. He doth not say, in him the love of God is fully, but verily or truly perfected.

In this sense, he that keepeth God's word is said to have the love of God perfected in him upon a double account.

(1.) Because he that keepeth God's word doth *reipsa præstare*, really perform love to him. Look as a tree is then said to be perfected when it hath not only buds and leaves, but fruit; so is the love of God perfected when it is not only in desire and profession, but practice. Indeed, love begins at the judgment, by a surpassing estimation of God as the chiefest good; from thence it acts in the will by ardent desires after, and frequent delight in, the enjoyment of him; but still the real part of love, by which the integrality of it is as it were consummated, is obedience in doing what he requireth from us.

(2.) Because he that keepeth God's word doth hereby *plenè manifestare*, fully declare and manifest that his love to God is sincere. In this respect, the Greek scholiast† renders *τελειώται* by *εὐθεωρεῖται*; and giveth this as the reason, because by our good works our love appeareth to be perfect. Nor is this an unusual acceptance of the phrase. When God's strength is said to be 'made perfect by weakness,' 2 Cor. xii. 9, it no doubt intends no more but that it is discovered to be perfect; and when Abraham's faith is said to be made perfect by works, James ii. 22. Aquinas‡ giveth this as the reason, because these were the operations, and so the manifestations, of his faith. Thus the keeping of God's word perfects our love, because it doth discover the perfection of it. By this it appeareth to be true and not feigned, since though feigned love may shew itself by words, it is only sincere love that expresseth itself by works; and were not love deeply rooted in the heart, it would not bring forth good fruit in the life; nay, indeed, by this it appeareth to be strong as well as true. Look as it argueth nature to be strong in a man, when he can perform with vivacity the operations of nature; so it manifesteth grace to be strong, when a man doth readily perform gracious actions. The fire which flameth forth, is not only kindled but is fervent; and our love manifesteth itself not only sincere, but strong, when it breaketh forth in our observance of God's word, throughout the course of our conversation.

And now what remaineth, but that every one of us approve our love to God by keeping his word. Love to God is that which we all pretend, and which is the riddle. Even profane wretches are ready to say, he that loveth not God, is not worthy to live; but in vain is love to God professed by us in our words, whilst it is not perfected in us by our deeds, 'How canst thou

\* Jerome adv. Pelag.

‡ Lor. in loc.

\* Vide Beza in loc.

† Ecumen. in loc.

‡ Aquin. ibid.

† Ambrose de offic. lib. iii. cap. ii.

§ Vide Bed. in loc.



say thou lovest me,' (said Delilah to Samson) 'since thy heart is not with me?' It may no less truly be objected, How can we say we love God, whilst our hands are not lift up to his precepts? The truth is, *amori cedunt omnes affectus*, all the affections attend on love; it is full of fear, of grief, of joy, of desire. He that loveth God cannot but be grieved when he offends him, glad when he pleaseth him, fearful to do anything which may provoke, desirous and careful to do whatsoever may delight him; and no wonder if, where these affections are active, there be an endeavour to avoid what he forbids, and perform what he requir-

eth. I end all, let every one of us conceive that Christ saith to us in those words, which he is pleased to ingeminate to his disciples: 'If you love me, keep my commandments,' John xiv. 13, 15; and again, 'If any man love me, he will keep my word;' and therefore, let us at once both testify and justify the truth of our love by the reality of our service, ever remembering what this blessed disciple asserts in conformity to his master's lesson, 'Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily' (and none but him) 'is the love of God perfected.'

### SERMON XXV.

*Hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, as Christ walked.*—1 JOHN II. 5, 6.

IT is an amiable excellency in any superior to become a precedent of that whereof he giveth a precept, and shew himself an actor in that whereof he is an exacter from others. It was the praise of Cæsar that his word to his soldiers was not *Ite*, but *Venite*; go, but come. Nor much unlike was that of Gideon to the people: Judges vii. 17, 'Look on me, and do likewise.' Indeed, by this means a governor layeth a double, and so a strong, obligation upon the inferiors, whilst he doth at once both enjoin by his commands, and invite by his pattern. For this reason no doubt it is, that the captain of our salvation, as he hath prescribed us laws, so he hath given us an example, not imposing that on us, to which he did not some way or other expose himself.

To this purpose are those phrases which are used by him in the Gospel, of 'coming after him,' and 'learning of him,' Mat. xvi. 24; and for this reason his beloved disciple here joineth these two together, and as in the former verses, he calleth upon us to keep his commandments, so here to 'walk as he walked.' 'Hereby we know,' &c.

The second principal position is that which cometh now to be handled, wherein we have two things observable:—

The Christian's being and his operation: his state and his work, his dignity and his duty.

The being, state, and dignity of a Christian is expressed in those phrases, 'We are in him,' and 'he abideth in him.'

The operation, work, and duty of a Christian is signified in those: 'Ought himself so to walk, as he walked;' both which we shall consider apart in themselves; and then jointly, in the dependence they have one upon another.

Consideration 1. In handling them severally, begin we with,

1. The being of a Christian; it is that which is characterised by two phrases, to wit, *being in* and

*abiding in* Christ; both of which are the same in substance, and yet each of which hath its proper emphasis.

That which is intended by both is, the spiritual and mystical union, which is between Christ and a Christian; that which is peculiar in either is, that by *being in*, is noted the nearness; and by *abiding in*, is intimated the firmness of this union.

1. Every true Christian is in Christ. *Accidentis esse est inesse*, saith the philosopher, the being of an accident is to be in his subject. *Christiani esse est inesse*, saith the divine, the being of a Christian is to be in Christ. Indeed, all creatures have their being in God, Acts xvii. 28, and are said to consist in Christ, Col. i. 17, in a general notion, because of their necessary dependence upon him, as their preserver. But all Christians are in Christ after a more peculiar notion, because of that near and close union which they have with him as their Redeemer. The intimacy of this union cannot be expressed by a fuller phrase than this of being in; it is one thing *adhære*, and another *inherere*; it is more to be *in*, than to be *with*, *by*, or *about* a thing. We do not only belong to, but we are in Christ; not that there is any confusion or transfusion of the substance or person of a Christian into the substance or person of Christ; but that there is a solid, substantial, and personal conjunction between them. Indeed, it may seem strange, how Christ being in heaven, and we on earth, we should be in him; but it may be easily understood, if we consider that it is not a local or corporal, but a spiritual union, which no distance of place can hinder. We have an emblem of this in that of marriage, the knot whereof is indissoluble, though the husband be in the western, and the wife in the eastern, part of the world. No wonder if this spiritual contract unite heaven and earth, Christ and a Christian together. The nature and quality of this union, is that which the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to represent in Scripture by

various similitudes. When St Paul speaketh of 'putting on the Lord Jesus Christ,' he implieth that a Christian is in Christ, as the body is in the garment, which covereth and encompasseth it; but this is the most remote allusion. The same apostle useth a fitter metaphor, when he compareth Christ to the head, and Christians to the members, Rom. vi. 5, Eph. i. 22; for as the head and members are so nearly united, that they make but one body; so is it with Christ and the church, in which respect the very name of Christ is given to the church, in those words of the apostle: 1 Cor. xii. 12, 'So also is Christ.' For which cause Origen saith, *per unum Christum, multi Christi*; by one Christ, many Christs are made; and St Austin,\* *Caput et corpus unus est Christus*, the head and the body, Christ and the church, make but one Christ. Parallel to this is that comparison our Saviour himself maketh use of, when he saith, 'I am the vine, you are the branches,' John xv. 1, 5. Look as the branch is in the vine, so as that its very being depends upon its being in the vine, without which it dieth and withereth; so is a Christian in Christ. And therefore he telleth his disciples a little after, 'Without me you can do nothing.' Not to multiply similitudes; of all carnal unions, that between a man and wife is nearest, and by that is this union shadowed, Eph. v. 32. In which respect St Paul calls marriage a mystery; and let us see that even this resemblance cometh short of expressing this union; for whereas the 'man and wife are but one flesh, he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit,' 1 Cor. vi. 17.†

To end this: See hence both the excellency of faith, and the felicity of a believer.

1. The excellency of faith, inasmuch as it is by faith we come to be in Christ. Sometimes we read that Christ is in us, and sometimes that we are in Christ. If we would know how Christ is in us, the answer is, by his Spirit, which he conferreth upon us. And therefore saith our apostle, 1 John iii. 14, 'Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.'

Again, if we would know how we are in Christ, the answer is, by believing. So much our apostle intimateth here; for these two clauses, 'Hereby we know that we know him,' and 'hereby we know that we are in him,' seem to be synonymous, and plainly intimate that we are in him by knowing, which is believing him. Indeed, both the graces of knowing and loving him before mentioned, concur to our union with Christ, inasmuch as the moral union of hearts is by love, and the mystical of persons by faith. Oh how efficacious is this grace, which tieth the knot between a Christian and Christ, and maketh them one!

2. The felicity of believers. A Christian, besides his natural, hath another more noble being, to wit, in

Christ. It is that which is both *magnum privilegium* and *magnum solatium*. A great privilege it is to have so near a relation to Christ. As it is the honour of Christ as God that he is *ens independens*, hath his being of himself, so it is the honour of a Christian that he hath his immediate dependence on, and being in, Christ; nor is there only honour, but comfort, in it, since we being in Christ have thereby a participation, as of his person, so of his merits and benefits. That fellowship with Christ whereof the apostle speaketh in the former chapter, chap. i. ver. 3, and all the comforts attending on it, whence flow they but from this spring, our union with Christ? By being in, we have a title to, communion with, and so wisdom, righteousness, redemption, sanctification, yea, all, through him.

That grand objection against the comfortable doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness—how can a man be made righteous by another man's righteousness?—is hereby answered, and the riddle of it unfolded. We are *in* him, and *one with* him, by whose righteousness we are made righteous. And as the husband marrying the wife endoweth her with all his worldly goods, so Christ, uniting the Christian to himself, invests him with his spiritual goods. Look, as all men being naturally in Adam, have the guilt of sin, so all Christians spiritually in Christ have the merit of his righteousness imputed to them, so much the rather, because that whereas we were but virtually in Adam, we are actually in Christ. Adam was only a public person, representing; Christ was not only our representative, but surety, by whose payment we must needs be discharged; yea, indeed, it were blasphemy to imagine there should be more demerit in Adam's sin to condemn, than merit in Christ's obedience to justify those who are in him. Hence that mellifluous aphorism of St Paul: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' How happy is that person who is free from condemnation; and he that is in Christ, having the merit of his satisfactory righteousness, by imputation communicated to him, must needs be free from the guilt of his sins, and so out of all fear of condemnation. 'He that dwelleth in the secret of the Most High, shall be quiet from fear of evil,' saith the psalmist, Ps. xci. 1. He that lieth in the bosom of Christ is safe from fear of danger. Oh, who can sufficiently prize this amiable privilege, this choice comfort of being in him! And so much for that phrase.

2. Every true Christian abideth in Christ. The philosopher distinguishes of two sorts of accidents: the one separable, the other inseparable. Those may both *adesse* and *abesse*, be present or absent, but these cannot be severed from the subject wherein they are. Such is the being of a Christian in Christ; and this is intimated in the phrase of *abiding*, which to inherency addeth permanency. In this all those fore-mentioned

\* Aug. de verb. dom. Serm. lxi.

† Ut doceret arctiorem esse communionem Christi nobiscum, quam viri cum uxore.—*Catv. ibid.*



resemblances are discrepant. The body is in the garments; ay, but they may be put off; the branches are in the tree, and the members knit to the head, but they may be cut off; the man and the wife are joined together, but they may be parted, whereas this union is indissoluble, inseparable, and they who are truly grafted into abide in Christ; nor yet doth this truth altogether want its resemblances. That phrase of *dwelling*, which this apostle elsewhere useth, Eph. iii. 17, is very significant to this purpose. It is one thing for a man to lodge as a guest, to sojourn as an inmate, and another thing to dwell as an inhabitant; where a man dwells it is the place of his settled and fixed residence. The true believer dwelleth in Christ as in his house, surely united to him. Suitable hereunto is that which learned Bp. Davenant\* hath observed upon those words, Col. ii. 12, 'Rooted and built up in him,' a tree that is rooted in the ground stands fast against the fiercest blasts; an house that is built upon a good foundation endureth wind and weather. Thus believers being rooted and built up in Christ are able to withstand temptations, corruptions, afflictions.

How greatly doth this meditation advance the comfort of a Christian! Indeed, in this respect man's renewed estate is better than his created, and a Christian in Christ happier than Adam in innocency. Adam might eat of the tree of life, but we are branches of him who is truly the tree of life; Adam might and did lose his right to the tree, we cannot our interest in Christ; Adam's standing was as it were by himself, so that he became subject to a miserable fall, our being in Christ, by whom we are preserved from such falling. Oh let believers rejoice in this holy and stable comfort: it was far more easy for David to pull the prey out of the bear's mouth, than it is for Satan to pluck us out of Christ's arms. If we be in him we are his members; and can we imagine that Christ will suffer one of his members to be rent from him? Indeed (be it spoken with holy reverence) Christ himself would be imperfect if any of his members should be defective, a thing inconsistent with the glory and honour of Christ. No wonder if, as we are in him, we are said to abide in him; and surely such a privilege carrieth with it an engagement, and that is it which next followeth:

II. The operation of a Christian; and that is to walk as Christ walked.

The phrase of walking is such as the Holy Ghost delighteth frequently to use. We have already met with it in this epistle, chap. i. 7, and therefore shall not here need to enlarge. Know in brief that we are all in this world travellers, and heaven is our country; so long, then, as we are here, we must not sit down but go forward. One sect among the philosophers was called the Peripatetics; such must all Christians be, keeping as it were an holy perambulation in this walk. The word of God is our light, the angels are our

\* Daven. *ibid.*

guards, the Spirit is our strength, and Christ is *Dux itineris*, the guide to go before us; and therefore we are here called upon to 'walk as he walked.'

That which would be chiefly inquired into is wherein the practice of this duty consists, and how far it extends. To which end know,

1. In general, that this imitation, which is required, hath a limitation annexed; we must walk as Christ walked, but not in all respects. There is *via solitaria* and *via socia*, some paths Christ walked in alone, and others we are to go in after him. Look as the schools distinguish of God's attributes, that some are incommunicable, and others communicable; so may we of Christ's walks. Some are beaten, others untrodden paths; some are such wherein we may, nay must, others such wherein we neither can nor dare to follow him.

In special, we are to consider Christ's walking, according to a threefold reference. *Tria sunt operum genera, quæ inter homines præstitit Christus*, saith Zanchy,\* there are three sorts of works which Christ wrought among men, to wit, as God, as God-man, as man.

1. Christ as God walked in a double way, to wit, *imperii et miraculi*.

(1.) *Imperii*, of authority and sovereignty, by virtue of which he sent his disciples for the colt without asking leave of the owner; for so God himself saith, Ps. l. 10, 'Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills;' and therefore he may command them when he pleaseth; but this is not imitable by us, in whom it would be no other than theft. Indeed, superior magistrates may give command in some cases for the ablation of mens' goods without their leave; but this not in imitation of Christ's practice, but by the deputation of his power, he having given that authority to his vicegerents on earth, for the better administration of justice and judgment.

(2.) *Miraculi*, of might and omnipotency, doing things which were not only besides, but above, nay, against, the course of nature. These we are to admire, but must not attempt to imitate; and though they are the supporters of our faith, yet no rules for our practice. To this purpose is that of St Austin upon this place, *For to hoc nos monet ut ambulemus in mari*, some may imagine that we are required to walk on the sea as Christ walked; but far be this from our thoughts, which, as it is impossible to perform, so it is presumptuous to attempt. Upon the same account it is that that holy father in another place† thus paraphraseth upon those words of Christ, 'Learn of me.' What should we learn of him? to make a world, to tread upon the water, to raise the dead? No; but to be meek and lowly. It was the itch of our first parents they would have been as God in knowledge, and we their unhappy progeny are troubled with the same distemper. We would trace the footsteps of divine

\* Zanch. in loc. † Aug. de Sanctâ Virgin. cap. xxxv.

power, and knowledge, and wisdom; but, alas! all such endeavours will prove vain and cursed, fruitless and sinful. Indeed, we find Christ's apostles working miracles, but not in imitation of Christ; rather Christ wrought signs and wonders by them, for the propagation of his gospel; and this was only a personal, and that a temporary privilege.

2. Christ, as God-man, Mediator, undertook many offices, in the exercise of which he was pleased to walk. As a prophet, he walked up the mount, and from thence gave laws and precepts to the people; as a priest, he walked to Mount Calvary, where, by suffering death upon the cross, he merited our redemption. He walked from the grave to heaven, where he maketh intercession as King and Head of his church; he walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, defending and governing his people, conquering his enemies, giving laws, conferring gifts. And in these walks we are not directed to follow him. It is an horrid presumption in the Romanists, who make a mere man head of the church, who attribute to saints and angels a power of interceding in our behalf. And therefore we justly assert with the apostle Paul, 'He hath given him' (to wit, exclusively) 'to be head,' Eph. i. 22. And again, 'There is one Mediator' (namely, both of redemption and intercession) 'between God and man,' he who is God and man, 'the man Christ Jesus,' 1 Tim. ii. 5. Indeed, an analogical imitation may here be allowed: as Christ is head of his church, so the king is head of his kingdom, and the master head of his family. As Christ walketh in the midst of his church, so the king in the midst of his kingdom, and the master in the midst of his house. Christ as a prophet doth give laws, so his ministers are prophets to interpret his laws to the people, and all superiors must be prophets, to instruct those who are under them. As Christ intercedeth in heaven for us, so we must pray one for another on earth; as Christ offered a propitiatory, real sacrifice, so we must by him offer gratulatory, spiritual sacrifices. Finally, to perform the office of a Mediator, he, dying on the cross, rose again from the grave, ascended into heaven; so we must die to sin, live to righteousness, and seek the things which are above. Thus we are allowed, nay, obliged, indirectly and allusively, to follow Christ in his walks as Mediator, but not directly.

3. Consider Christ's walks as he was man, and so we shall find the actions he performed reducible to three heads, ceremonial, circumstantial, and moral.

(1.) Christ walked in a way of conformity to the ceremonial law, and therefore he is said to be 'made under the law,' Gal. iv. 4. On the eighth day he was circumcised, and therefore became obedient to the whole law of Moses; but in those walks we must not trace him. Though he was pleased to fulfil the law in himself, that it might have an honourable burial, yet he hath abolished it as to us; it is not, ought not, to be observed, and thereby as it were revived by us.

(2.) Many things which Christ did were circumstantial, in some of which it is unlawful, in others possibly it may be inconvenient, and in neither of both it is needful to imitate him. The duration of time in which Christ fasted, to wit, forty days and forty nights, is such as being miraculous, we ought not to follow; we are indeed to fast as he did, but not so long, since thereby we should be guilty of self-murder; though withal it was not imprudently but piously appointed by the church, that so long time as Christ fasted *a toto* wholly from food, we should *a tali et a tanto*, from some kind of food, and from our usual measure of eating. Christ's choosing such persons as publicans and sinners, to eat and drink and converse familiarly with, inasmuch as he came to call them to repentance, and was not capable of pollution by them, is no warrant for us to be familiar with wicked men, from whom the best may more easily receive evil than do good to them; though yet withal it giveth ministers leave to converse with those under their charge (though wicked), that if by any means they may bring them to God. Those circumstances of place and time which Christ observed in prayer, when, as one time we read, he withdrew himself into the wilderness to pray, and at another time he prayed all night, though the one direct to choice of private places for private prayers, and the other intimate long prayer in some cases not to be unlawful; yet neither doth the one oblige us to leave our houses and run into a wilderness, nor the other to debar ourselves of a whole night's sleep for the exercise of our devotion. That gesture of sitting which Christ was pleased to use when he preached to the people would be thought not unlawful, yet inconvenient, for us his ministers to follow, since whereas he taught magisterially, we but ministerially, and so a more humble posture (except in case of necessity) best befits us. Finally, the time at which our Lord administered the holy communion, namely, in the night after supper, the posture in which (as it is imagined) he participated it, to wit, that of lying, which he used (after the common custom) at his other meals, are no patterns necessarily obliging us to follow them; for as to both the time and gesture it appeareth they were only occasional, it being most suitable that the time of first administration of that which was to come in the room of, should be immediately after, the passover, and if he did use (which yet no evangelist expressly affirmeth) that gesture, the probable reason is because he had used it before at the passover, and so being nearly\* incidental, was not intended for our imitation. The truth is this, on the one hand if it at all oblige, it bindeth not only to *a* but *the* table gesture (since the custom of a country is no dispensation for what is of religious and necessary concernment) and so even they who pretend in this to imitate Christ are defective. But on the other hand in reality it doth no more bind ministers and people to conform

\* Qu. 'merely'?—ED.



to it in that holy administration, than that gesture he used in his sermons doth bind the ministers in their preaching; and if (as by the practice of all sorts it seemeth to be granted) it be more decent for the minister to stand preaching though Christ sat, I see no reason why it may not be more decent for the ministers and people to receive kneeling, notwithstanding Christ did it in the usual posture of his meals; though to all this it might be added, that since the posture there used was *humi discumbere*, to lie down upon the ground, this of kneeling cometh nearer to it than either that of sitting or standing. In fine, the sum amounts to thus much: Christ's ceremonial actions, being in conformity to a law abolished, *are not*, and his circumstantial actions, being not commanded nor forbidden by any law, *need not* be imitated by us; nor doth this walking as he walked extend to them.

(3.) But lastly: Christ walked in a way of obedience to the moral law, 'humbling himself and becoming obedient even to the death,' and these footsteps of his moral actions we are to tread in. For the fuller explication of this be pleased to know that

[1.] Our Lord Christ is (to speak in Ennodius his phrase) *Clara epitome virtutum*, an exact epitome of graces, in St Bernard's language,\* *Cardinalium virtutum exemplum*, a spotless example of the cardinal virtues; or if you will in Tertullian's style,† *cumulata perfectionis massalis summa*, an accumulated heap of spiritual perfections. Suitable hereunto it is that Cresolius calls him,‡ a seminary of graces, temple of religion, tabernacle of goodness, and habitation of virtue. Indeed, there is no grace nor duty, either towards God or ourselves, or others, whereof Christ hath not set us a copy. Those graces of trust, fear, love, and obedience which we are to exercise towards God; those virtues of loyalty to kings, subjection to parents, equity and charity which are due to man; finally, those ornaments of humility, temperance, patience, by which we possess ourselves, were all eminent in him, as it were easy to demonstrate would the time permit, or did the text require it. What he in Lucian said concerning Solon,§ *πάντα ἑωζακας ἴδῃ Σολῶνα ἴδων*, In seeing Solon you see all that is good, may more truly be affirmed of Christ, in whom are all treasures of graces as well as knowledge. That of the apostle concerning himself and the rest of the saints, 'our conversation is in heaven,' may not unfitly be applied to this duty of the imitation of Christ; he hath his conversation in heaven, who leads it according to Christ's example; and good reason, since as Athanasius excellently,|| Christ whilst on earth did *ὄρανον περιστρέφειν*, carry heaven about with him. This Sun of Righteousness went through the *Libra* of justice, *Leo* of fortitude, *Virgo* of chastity, *Taurus* of industry, *Gemini* of love to God and man. Indeed,

the firmament is not more full of stars than he is of graces. It is a rule in philosophy, *Primum in unoquoque genere est mensura reliquorum*, that which is the first in any kind is to be the measure of the rest; and Christ being the first, the grand exemplar of virtue, no wonder if we are required to walk as he walked.

[2.] One singular end of Christ's coming into the world was, that he might become a pattern of duty. Indeed, the chief and primary end of his advent was to be a Saviour, but a secondary was to be an example. Upon this account it is that St Basil saith,\* One end of Christ's coming was, that in him *ὡς ἐν εἰκότι*, as in a picture, we might behold the lineaments of all virtues, and accordingly learn to order our conversation aright. When Christ had washed his disciples' feet, he saith to them, John xiii. 15, 'I have given you an example;' and truly for this cause he lived that he might give, yea, according to St Peter, ii. 21, for this end he died, 'that he might leave us an example that we should follow his steps.'

[3.] To endeavour as far as we can that all those graces which Christ practised may shine forth in our conversations, is to walk as Christ walked, so that this as here specified, admits both of an extent and a restraint.

*First.* Of an extent; *as*, that is in all those moral steps wherein he walked. Thus Tertullian saith,† To walk as Christ walked is to observe the discipline of that piety and patience, justice and wisdom, which flourished in Christ's life. And Prosper putting this question,‡ What is it to walk as Christ walked? returneth this answer, it is *Contemnere omnia prospera que contempsit, non timere adversa que pertulit, libenter facere que fecit*, &c., to contemn what he contemned, suffer what he suffered, and do what he did. Indeed, to imitate Christ but in some things, is only to step as he stepped; but to walk as he walked is to imitate him in all, not only to be lowly but holy, just, but charitable, as he was; go about doing good, but suffering evil as he did, is to imitate him in his active and in his passive obedience; to follow him in his life, yea, in his death. For as St Austin observeth,§ when Christ was *fixus in cruce*, fast nailed to the cross, he walked in the ways of constancy, courage, patience, charity towards his enemies, which we must practise when at any time we are called to suffer. We cannot have a better expositor of the disciple than the master, and Christ saith to follow him is to 'deny ourselves, and take up our cross.'

*Secondly.* Of a restraint; it being an *as* not of equality but quality, nor doth it require any exactness of performance, but only a sincerity of purpose. Christ's phrase is following and coming after him, which we may do though *non passibus æquis*, we come far behind him. Excellent to this purpose are those

\* Bern. in Cant. Serm. xii.

† Cres. de Virtut.

† Tertul. in Mar. lib. ix. cap. xviii.

§ Lucian Dialog.

|| Athanas. orat. contra gent.

\* Bas. ascet.

† Prosp. Sent.

† Tert. de Resur. lib. ii. cap. xlv.

‡ Aug. in Ep.

expressions of an ancient,\* *Proderit imitari et si nemo valeat adquare; persequi debemus, et si consequi non possimus; non eisdem passibus, sed eodem tramite, eisdem vestigiis insistendum*: made equal we cannot, conformable we may be to him; to attain to his measure is impossible, to press hard towards it is necessary; to go with the same speed and evenness is not expected, but to go in the same path, tread in the same steps, is required. In one word, those graces which did flame forth in Christ's life, must at least sparkle in ours; which did shine bright in his, must twinkle in ours; which were perfectly in him, must be sincerely in us; so shall we fulfil this apostolical dictate, to walk as he walked.

I end this; *Naturale homini alium imitari*, man is naturally a mimic, and loves to follow; and what fuller, fitter, better pattern can be made choice of than this here set before us? Oh, then, as Moses did all things in making the 'tabernacle according to the pattern which God shewed him in the mount,' so let us order all our actions according to the pattern Christ taught in the mount, and as he taught, so did in the course of his life. It is the command of God to Abraham in the Old Testament, 'walk before me,' Gen. xvii. 1; it is the voice of Christ to his disciples in the New, 'come after me,' Mat. xvi. 24; and both very useful. We must walk before God by a continued remembrance of his eye; we must come after Christ by a due observance of his steps; and so walking as having God to be our spectator and Christ to be our guide, we cannot wander. This is that which hath still been the practice of holy men, to set Christ before them as their example. This did St Paul, who adviseth others to follow him as he did Christ, 1 Thes. i. 6; thus did Martianus of whom Paulinus saith,† *Cælestis hominis imaginem perfectâ Christi portavit imitatione*, he bare the image of the heavenly man by a perfect (that is, sincere) imitation of Christ. Oh, let it be so with us in everything we go about! Let us consider with ourselves what Christ did, or what we have reason to believe he would do in the like case; in case of injury Christ would forgive; of contention, Christ would be a peacemaker; of miseries, Christ would shew mercy; of reproaches, persecutions, Christ would suffer patiently; let us do likewise. Christ is the sun, and then only do the watches of our lives move right when they are set by the dial of his motion; Christ is the book of life, and then only is the look of our conscience fair when it is written according to that copy.

To this end learn we, according to the counsel of the author to the Hebrews, chap. xii. 2, to 'look unto Jesus.' We, (saith St Paul) 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image;' and we beholding the graces of Christ are transformed into the image of them. Look as a painter (to use Macarius his similitude)‡ can draw a man's picture to the life if he sit before him and steadfastly look upon

him; but if he turn away his face the painter can do nothing; so then doth Christ draw the lineaments of his virtues upon our souls, when we diligently look upon him; indeed who can seriously view Christ and the ways wherein he walked, and not be in love with them, and desire to walk in them? All his ways (as Solomon saith of wisdom) are 'ways of pleasantness and peace.' No cleanness or purity, no safety or security, no peace or tranquility, no delight or pleasure like to that which is to be found in Christ's ways. True, indeed, they are narrow ways in regard to their difficulty to flesh and blood; they are slabby ways in regard of the afflictions which accompany those that live godly in Christ Jesus; but they are clean ways, without the mire of filthiness; for they are safe ways, fenced with the hedge of divine protection; they are pleasant ways, in which we have always the sun of God's favour shining on us; yea, they are blessed ways, for they lead to life and glory. Who can behold them, and not be allured to go in them?

Look we therefore with a serious and spiritual eye upon Christ and his ways, and that so long till, according to St Paul's advice, Philip. ii. 5, 'The same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus;' and then having the same mind we shall do the same works, so easily is the life conformed where the heart is inclined. In one word, if our eye be fixed and our hearts willing, the foot will be ready to 'run the race that is set before us.' I shut up with that of Leo,\* *Imitami quod operatus est, diligite quod dilexit*, love what he loved, so will you do what he did; to which we should be so much the rather induced, considering the necessity which our profession layeth upon us of so doing, and that will appear if you

Join both parts of the text together, which is the other consideration, and cometh now to be handled. 'He that saith, ought,' it is not only (as Zanchy well observeth) *utile* but *debitum*, that which he *may do*, or that which is *best for him to do*, but that which he *ought to do*.

This will the better appear if you consider both the relations which they who are in Christ have to him, and the influence they have from him.

1. The relations which they that are in Christ have to him are many and near, all which oblige to walk as he walked. 'He that saith he is in Christ,' saith he is the friend of Christ; and friends go hand in hand, have the same affections and inclinations. 'He that saith he is in Christ,' saith he is so *in* him that he is *under* him; Christ is his Lord, and he his servant, and *probum servum pro ingenio domini conversari videmus*, saith Tertullian,† We see good servants conform themselves to their master's will, and frame themselves to their temper. 'He that saith he is in Christ,' saith that Christ is his king, and he his subject, and *Regis ad exemplum*, all men love to imitate their prince; if Nero like music, all Rome will turn

\* Arnulph. Ep. xii. † Paulin. Ep. ‡ Mac. hom. xxx.

\* Leo. de Resur. lib. ii. cap. iiii. † Tert. de patient.



fiddlers; let the king be lame, and his subjects will halt for company; nay, more than all this, in saying we are in Christ, we say we are his seed, his offspring; and *hominibus latum et gloriosum filios habere consimiles*,\* It is a joy to parents when their children are like them, and the care of good children to follow their parents; so that since in all these relations there is an obligation, 'He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought,' &c.

2. There is a singular influence which Christ hath upon all those who are in him, enabling them to walk as he walked. It is true our blessed Saviour speaketh of branches in him that bear not fruit, but there he meaneth those who are in him, *φαινομένους* not *έντως*, only in appearance, not in reality, who in respect of their Christian profession seem to be, and in others, perhaps their own opinion, are in him, not of those who are in him by a real, substantial, and spiritual union with him, since all that are so in him cannot but receive grace from him to become fruitful in good works. They that are in Christ are his members, and as the members, whilst united to the head, have sense and motion derived from it; so is it with those who abide in Christ, to whom he imparts that motion whereby they are able to walk as he walked. They that are in Christ are his branches, John xv. 3; and as the living branches receive sap from the root, yea, the sap that is communicated to the branches is of the same nature with that in the root, and the fruit according, so doth every one that is in Christ partake of grace from Christ; yea, that grace which is in Christ is infused into the Christian. Finally, 'He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.' If any man be in Christ he hath the spirit of Christ; and look as when the spirit of Elijah came upon Elisha, he was enabled to do the same miracles which he did; so in whomsoever Christ's spirit dwelleth, it strengthens them to do the works of Christ, and become like to him. Very observable to this purpose is that phrase of 'sealing with the spirit of promise,' Eph. i. 13; for as the seal maketh the impression of its own stamp upon the wax, whereby it is that the characters upon the seal are to be discerned in the wax, so doth Christ's Spirit stamp his own image upon the soul; whereby it is that the graces of Christ appear in the life of a Christian. Hence it follows that 'whosoever saith he is in Christ, ought to walk as he walked,' or else he is a liar, and saith he is what he is not; in which respect Leo excellently, † *Falsæ professionis imagine utimur, si cujus nomine gloriamur, ejus instituta non sequamur*, if we conform not to his precepts and pattern, in whose name we glory, and of

\* Cypr. de zelo et tivo.

† Leo Serm. v. de jejun. 7 m. i. mensis.

whose relation we boast, all our profession is in vain, nay, a mere lie.

To end therefore, *explora teipsum infelix qui baptisatus es in Christum*, whosoever thou art that being baptized into Christ professest to put him on, and calling thyself a Christian, sayest thou art in him, try thyself by this mark: dost thou walk as he walked? nay, rather dost thou not walk contrary to him? He was holy, thou art profane; he was humble, thou art proud; he was meek, thou art contentious; he was charitable, thou art malicious. Thou sayest thou art in Christ, and yet thou livest like a beast in sensuality, nay, like a devil in hatred and envy; but let no man deceive himself with such a vain profession. *Nec quisquam se Christianum judicet, nisi qui Christi doctrinam sequitur et imitatur exemplum*,\* nor let any man esteem himself a Christian who doth not resolve to follow Christ's commands and example. Indeed, what Alexander said to one of his name who was a coward, *Aut depone nomen, aut fortiter pugna*, either shew thyself valorous, or do not call thyself Alexander, that Christ saith to all loose Christians, Either live according to my pattern, or renounce my name. 'Let then every one that nameth the name of Christ' express the nature and do the works of Christ. Pythagoras, instructing women, † in a grave oration told them, that many of the names which were given to them in their conditions, both before and after marriage, were the names of goddesses, and thence exhorted them to imitation of those goddesses. The name (beloved) which we all have taken upon us is the name of Christ, and therefore let us account ourselves engaged to conform to him. This is that which will both justify the truth of our present profession, and make good our future expectation. There are many, as St Bernard observeth, ‡ who would *Christum consequi*, and yet not *sequi*, be where Christ is, sit down in his throne as he is in his Father's, and yet will not go where he went, and walk as he walked. But, alas! it cannot be; there is no coming to the same place but by the same path. *Sequi servatorem est participare salutem*, saith Irenæus elegantly, § the way to partake of salvation is to follow our Saviour. And therefore he that saith he is now in Christ, and hopeth hereafter to be with him, must so walk as he walked. In a word, live as Christ lived, holily, justly, soberly; die as Christ died, believingly, charitably, patiently; so shall you reign as Christ reigneth, gloriously, triumphantly, eternally. Amen.

\* Aug. de Vitâ Christianâ, tr. viii. cap. xiv.

† Jamblic. Pythag. lib. i. cap. xi.

‡ Bern. in Cant. serm. xxi.

§ Iren. lib. iv. cap. xxviii.

## SERMON XXVI.

*Hereby we know that we know him.*—1 JOHN II. ver. 3, part former. *Hereby we know that we are in him.*  
—Ver. 5, part latter.

THAT rule of divines concerning precepts—*Tota lex est copulativa*, the whole law is copulative—may no less truly be applied to graces, which, as so many links in a chain of gold, are knit one to the other. The mother and root grace of all is faith (here called knowledge), as being that which ingrafts us into Christ, of whose fulness (saith the evangelist, John i. 16) ‘we receive grace for grace.’ This faith, wherever it is, is attended with charity; for ‘faith’ (saith St Paul, Gal. v. 6) ‘works by love.’ This love cannot reside in any soul, but it will manifest itself by obedience. So much our blessed Saviour expresseth: John xiv. 13, ‘If any man love me, he will keep my commandments.’ This obedience is then best performed when we are conformed to Christ in our lives; and therefore calling upon us to take his yoke, he biddeth us learn of him, Mat. xi. 29, 30. Finally, by this obedience to, and imitation of Christ, we gain our assurance of our interest in him. Whence the apostle Peter, requiring us to ‘give diligence to make our calling and election sure,’ 2 Peter i. 10, presently addeth, ‘If you do these things,’ that is, practise those graces whereof Christ hath given us a pattern. Thus there is not only a concomitancy, but an efficiency, of graces, a connection of one with, but a dependence of one upon, the other; whilst knowledge begets love, and love keepeth the commandments, and keeping the commandments we walk as Christ walked, and by all these we come to know that we know him, and are in him. All of which are succinctly and distinctly laid down in these four verses: ‘Hereby we know,’ &c.

In these verses there are two clauses yet remaining to be discussed, the one in the beginning of the third, and the other in the end of the fifth; the former of which refers to the keeping of the commandments, and the other, though it may look backward, yet most rationally is conceived to look forward, to walking as Christ walked; both for substance the same, and contain in them two collateral propositions: the one whereof asserts the attaining a comfortable knowledge of our knowledge of and interest in Christ—‘We know that we know him,’ ‘we know we are in him;’ and the other an especial means whereby that knowledge is attained, namely, *hereby*, that is, by keeping his commandments; and again *hereby*, that is, by walking as he walked. Of both which in their order.

1. St John here affirmeth of himself and other saints, we know that we know him, we know that we are in him. It is that indeed which, not only here, but elsewhere, he asserts in the next chapter, ver. 14, ‘We know that we are translated;’ and again in the fourth chapter, ver. 13, ‘We know that we dwell in him;’

and in the fifth, ver. 19, ‘We know that we dwell in God.’ For the better opening of it, take notice of these ensuing considerations.

1. There is a threefold object, whereabout this knowledge is conversant, namely, what was before all time, what shall be after all time, and what is in this present time. This knowledge looketh backward, and that as far as eternity, to the decree of election, which was before the foundation of the world. In this respect it is St Peter’s advice, 2 Peter i. 5, ‘Make your election sure.’ This knowledge looketh forward at the future estate of felicity; upon which account St Paul, in the name of himself and others, saith, 2 Cor. v. 1, ‘We know that we have a building in the heaven.’ Finally, this knowledge looketh upon our present estate of vocation, justification, and sanctification, our union with and faith in Christ, and of this our apostle here speaketh, to which I shall therefore confine my discourse.

2. There is a double knowledge attainable by a Christian, to wit, direct and reflex. The direct knowledge is terminated in Christ, who is its object; the reflex in the knowledge itself, which is the act. Both these kinds of knowledge our apostle here expressly speaketh of when he saith, ‘We know that we know him;’ where the latter *we know* is that *scientia*, knowledge which immediately looks on Christ, and the former is that *conscientia*, knowledge which immediately looks upon the act of knowing. Indeed, it is the choice privilege of the rational soul, that it can reflect upon its own acts, whereby it is that a man not only understandeth and willet, but knoweth that his soul doth exercise these functions. This is that which accordingly a Christian improveth in respect of his spiritual actings, so that he doth not only put forth the operations of his graces, but is in some measure assured that he doth put them forth. For as when I look in a glass I look upon myself looking in it, when I touch my body I feel my feeling of it, in like manner the soul, by reflex knowledge, apprehends her own apprehension, judgeth of her own judgment, and believes her belief. Suitable to which is that of devout Anselm,\* *Qui fidei sensum in corde habet, hic scit Christum Jesum in se esse*, a Christian having an experimental sense of faith in his soul, knoweth himself to be in Christ.

3. This knowledge of knowing Christ, and being in him, is only in respect of ourselves, not others. ‘We know him,’ saith the apostle; not that ‘you know him,’ or that you are in him, but that *we*; every one attaineth this knowledge in respect of *himself*. Con-

\* Anselm in Corinth.



gruous to this purpose is that of St Austin,\* *Fides est in intimis nostris; nec enim quisquam hominum videt in olio, sed unusquisque in semetipso*, faith is inwardly seated in the heart, which one man cannot discern in another, but only in himself. Indeed, negatively, we may conclude concerning those whom we see wallowing in profaneness, living in wickedness, that for the present they are not in Christ, nor have any saving knowledge of him. Positively, we cannot [know] concerning any, though never so holy in appearance, that they are in Christ, since, whereas men may give undoubted signs of their badness, they cannot of their goodness. Indeed, this 'new name' is such as 'no man knoweth, but he who receiveth it,' and that only in himself who doth receive it. And as to know it in ourselves is very difficult, so to know it in another is impossible. True, we must here distinguish of a double knowledge, to wit, of charity and certainty. The former is only a probable opinion (improperly called knowledge), and is that which we may have of others being in Christ by their external conversation. Thus the author to the Hebrews, chap. vi. 9, was 'persuaded better things' of them to whom he wrote; and St Peter, 1 Peter v. 12, calling Sylvanus a 'faithful brother,' addeth, 'as I suppose.' Nor are we to understand any more by St Paul's phrase concerning the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 4, 'knowing your election of God,' since not the apostles themselves (except by special revelation) could infallibly know any particular persons to be the chosen of God, and members of Christ.

4. Lastly, this knowledge of our own interest in Christ, on the one hand, is not barely conjectural, but infallible; and yet, on the other hand, it is not perfect and complete.

(1.) This knowledge is not, cannot be, perfect; for by the same reason that one, every grace may be perfect in this life; whereas full perfection of grace is the privilege of that other life. Indeed, one of the names by which this grace is called in Scripture, is *πληροφορία*, full assurance; but that is only in a comparative notion, since none ever had an absolutely full assurance. There are indeed several degrees and measures, as of others, so of this grace; and the higher degree may be said to be full in comparison of the lower, but the highest is not altogether perfect. True it is sometimes, and in some persons, this knowledge may be so clear and firm, that there may not be any sensible stirrings of infidelity. The conclusion which such an one maketh of his union with Christ, may be peremptory, without actual hesitation; but still there are some remainders of unbelief in the heart, whence it is that their knowledge is not always in an equal height, but hath its ebbs and flows as well as flowings.

(2.) But though it be not perfect, so as altogether to expel doubting, yet it is infallible, so as to exclude deceit. It is not only we *think*, or we *hope*, but we

\* Aug. de Trin. lib. xiii. cap. ii.

*know*. It is true, as all other graces, so this hath its counterfeit. There is a presumption which looketh like this persuasion, whence it is that a man may be deceived about it; but still the knowledge itself is such as doth not deceive. To this purpose are those similitudes which the learned Davenant maketh use of:\* a man that is drunk may think himself sober, a man that is in a dream may imagine himself to be awake, and both are cheated in their opinions; yet this hindereth not but that a sober man may know that he is not drunk, a man that is awake may know that he is not asleep, and this knowledge of theirs is infallible. Thus whilst hypocrites have a deceitful presumption of their union with, it hindereth not but that regenerate persons may and do attain an infallible knowledge of their knowledge of, and interest in, Christ.

To apply this: what remaineth but that every one of us labour to be among the number of this *we*, to know that we do know and are in Christ. Indeed, they who take upon them the profession of Christianity may in this respect be fitly ranked into three sorts.

1. Some there are who are in Christ, but know it not; like children who live in their mother's belly, but are not themselves sensible of it. As Jacob said of Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 16, 'God was in this place, and I knew it not,' so may it be said of many Christians, Christ is in them, and they in him, and they are not aware of it. Of whom we may pronounce in Virgil's words,

O fortunatos nimium, bona si sua norint,  
Agricolas!

How happy were they did they but know their happiness, for want of which their zealous minds pass unrighteous censures upon themselves, as if they were miserable.

2. Others there are who pretend to know and be assured of their interest in Christ, when yet they have no true right or title to him. Their self-flattery fills them with this vain self-conceit, and their blind ignorance causeth them to presume that they know Christ; and whereas the condition of the former sort is in their apprehension only, the estate of this sort is really miserable. Indeed, as one saith excellently, they are *eo magis desperati, quò minus desperantes*, their case is so much the more desperate, because they are so far from despairing, that they presume; since, by this presumptuous opinion of having already attained, they are hindered from labouring after an interest in Christ. And as the philosopher said of one who had been ill taught, that his task was double, both *dedocere* and *docere*, to unteach and then teach such an one, so may we say of such persons, they must first be taken off from their sandy foundation, and then fixed upon the true rock, whereby it is that they are brought with more difficulty into the state of salvation.

3. But, lastly, others there are who both truly know

\* Daven. Determ. iv.

Christ, and know that they know him, are by faith engrafted into Christ, and have an inward sense of that faith, and so of their being engrafted in him. Among this number was St John; and not he only, but many others, as well Christians as apostles. In which respect he useth the plural number; and indeed, an endeavour after this reflex knowledge, is that to which every Christian is bound. It is St Peter's counsel, 2 Peter i. 10, 'Giving all diligence to make your calling and election sure.' And if you please to view the beginning of his epistle, you shall find those whom he puts upon this work, to be 'all that had obtained like precious faith' with the apostles (to wit, for quality, though not quantity); that is, all believers who, being chosen and called, must strive for an assurance that they are so.

Among others, there are two considerations which may serve as spurs to quicken our endeavours, and wings to accelerate our pursuit after this knowledge, namely, the possibility of attaining it, and the utility of it when attained.

1. If we strive after it, we shall not labour in vain. Indeed, God hath appointed to every Christian his measure of spiritual stature; yet so as that no Christian who is not wanting to himself, but may attain so far as to have some degree of this knowledge. Where St Peter in the fore-mentioned scripture requireth all believers to give all diligence to gain this assurance, what doth he but imply at once both a difficulty and a possibility of gaining it? since, were it not difficult, there were no need of *all*; and if it be not possible, it will be in vain to use *any* diligence. When St Paul calleth upon the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, to 'examine themselves whether they be in the faith,' what is his design but (as the following words, *Know you not that Jesus Christ is in you?* intimate) that they might come to know their interest in Christ? And surely it were in vain to bid us search for that which cannot be found; examine whether we be in the faith, if we cannot know whether we have faith or no.

2. Possible then it is, and not only so, but profitable, as conducing very much to the exercise of many duties, and the participation of many comforts.

1. Christians are called upon in Scripture to cry Abba, Father; to rejoice in the Lord, Philip. iii. 1; to be thankful; to love the appearing, and look for the coming, of Christ, Titus ii. 13. Now these are such duties as are to be performed by none but them who know that they know Christ, and are in him. How can we call God Father unless we know him to be so? Nor can we be assured that he is our Father, except we know ourselves to be in Christ, through whom alone he becometh a Father. Gerson hath well observed,\* that to joy there must three things concur: *objectum delectabile, applicatio ad appetentem, et cognitio applicationis*, a delightful object, an application of this object to him who desireth it, and a knowledge of that application. It is so in spiritual joy: Christ is the delectable object,

\* Gers. par. 2. comp. Theol. de delect.

our knowing him and being in him is the application of this object; and though these two be present, yet if there be not a knowledge of this application, there can be no rejoicing. How full of tears and despair is Hagar, Gen. xxi. 16, when yet a well was by her! How sad and pensive are those two disciples, whilst yet Christ draweth near to them, and walketh with them! Luke xxiv. 15, 17. How bitterly doth Mary weep at the sepulchre, whenas he for whom she weepeth is risen from the grave and standeth by her! John xx. 14, 15. And why all this? Alas! Hagar seeth not the well; the disciples and Mary knew him not to be Jesus. Thus, as it is impossible to desire that we know not to be good, so to delight in that good whereof we know not ourselves possessed. And as we cannot be *joyful in*, so neither *thankful for*, those benefits, whereof we have not a sensible fruition. He only that can say, 'God of his abundant mercy hath begotten me again,' can say, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Peter i. 4. Finally, Christ's coming at the last day shall be 'in flaming fire, rendering vengeance on them that know him not;' only to them that are in him he will arise a Sun of righteousness with healing on his wings. So that whilst we are uncertain of our being in Christ, we cannot with comfort expect, or with desire long for, his coming.

2. And as this knowledge enableth us to these duties, so it is that which enlargeth our comforts. True it is, he is an holy man who hath grace without peace, but he is the happy man who hath grace and peace. The knowledge of our interest in Christ is not necessary to the end itself, as if there were no salvation without it; but it is needful to solace us in the way to the end, since there is no consolation without it. What is it that heighteneth our fellowship and communion with God, that giveth us boldness of access to the throne of grace, that causeth the soul to converse with God as a favourite with his prince, a son with his father, a bride with her bridegroom, but this knowledge? How amiable is the meditation of Christ, in his person, natures, offices, merits, to him who, knowing himself to be in Christ, knoweth all these to be his! Everything of Christ is sweet to such a soul; it doth him good to view his wounds; nay, with Thomas, to put his hands in the hole of Christ's side, whilst he can say, 'My Lord, and my God.' With what gladness doth he receive the word of God in every part of it, since the very threatenings do not affright him, because he knoweth they belong not to him! This knowledge of our interest in Christ is that which multiplieth the sweetness of all temporal enjoyments, inasmuch as by this means we look upon ourselves as having not only a civil, but a spiritual, right to them, we look upon them as the fruits and pledges of special love; yea, the earnest of a better inheritance. Indeed, mercy looketh like mercy, and every blessing is doubly beautiful in the eye of such a Christian. One being asked what was the best pros-



pect, returned this answer, 'To see a great way in his own land.' He that knoweth he is in Christ may look both on earth and heaven as his; according to that of St Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'All things are yours.'

Finally, this is that which contents us in all estates, supports us under all afflictions, and armeth us against the fears of death. He must needs be willing to want anything else who knoweth he hath Christ, who is 'all in all.' He need not, cannot, be troubled with any evils, who, knowing that he is in Christ, knoweth all things shall work for his good, Rom. viii. 28; nor can the separation which death maketh be terrible to him who is assured of that union with Christ, which admits of no separation, no, not by death itself, ver. 38; yea, which death is so far from hindering, that it hasteneth to a fuller perfection.

To end this, therefore, let our first care be to know Christ, and by knowing to get into him; and then let our next endeavour be to know that we do know him and are in him. The former will give us a right to, but it is the latter will give us the comfort of, all those glorious privileges and benefits which Christ hath purchased; and if we would know how to attain this reflexive knowledge, pass we on to the,

2. Next and last proposition, which discovereth the means of attaining it, namely, *hereby*. By keeping the commandments, we know that we know him; and by walking as Christ walked, we know that we are in him. Look as if the question be put, How we shall know the true church? the answer is, By its essential marks; so if you ask, How shall we know that we are true Christians? our apostle answereth, *Hereby*; by the characteristic properties.

To elucidate this assertion, observe these following particulars:

1. That knowledge which we have of our being in Christ, and knowing him by these characters is not *à priori*, but *à posteriori*; not by the causes, but by the effects. Our obedience is not the root, but the fruit, of faith; and we are not in Christ because we walk in him, but we walk in him because we are in him. To this purpose is that note of Beza upon the text, *Bona opera nos non inserunt Christo, sed insitos consequuntur*, good works do not engraft us into Christ, but our being engrafted into Christ, enableth us to perform good works. As, therefore, the tree is known by its fruit, and life is known by breathing and motion, which are the effects of it, so we know our faith in, and union with, Christ, by our obedience to, and imitation of, him.

2. That knowledge we have by these characters is safe and sure, yea, such as cannot deceive us. For,

(1.) Inasmuch as the commands which Christ requireth us to keep, and the ways wherein he walked which we must follow, are clearly set down in the word; if we faithfully compare our actions with the rule, we may know whether we keep the commandments, and walk as Christ walked or not. True it is,

many are cheated with alchymy instead of gold; think themselves to have those graces which Christ did shew forth, whenas they are counterfeit. But this is not for want of an exact rule discovering, but because of a deceitful heart misapplying. So that, were men but faithful to themselves, they might be able to pass a right censure in this particular. Hence it is that, whilst the hypocrite deludeth himself with a partial obedience and a counterfeit imitation, the regenerate Christian, being in some measure enlightened, discovereth what is sincere and what is feigned, and so judgeth righteous judgment. To this purpose is that of St Austin,\* *Qui diligit fratrem, magis novit dilectionem quàm diligit, quam fratrem quem diligit*, He who loveth his brother, more surely knoweth the love whereby he loveth him, than his brother whom he loveth. And hence it is that the same father saith,† *Est modus gloriandi in conscientia ut noveris fidem tuam esse sinceram, ut noveris spem tuam esse certam, ut noveris charitatem tuam esse sine simulatione*, This is the rejoicing, yea, glorying of a Christian, whilst his conscience, regulated by the word, and illuminated by grace, giveth in evidence that his faith is sincere, his hope firm, and his love unfeigned.

(2.) Inasmuch as this obedience to, and imitation of Christ, are the necessary and particular effects of our knowledge of and being in Christ, he who findeth the one may undoubtedly infer the other.

To unfold this briefly, know that the effects of a lively faith are of three sorts.

[1.] Some which so flow from a true faith that they are likewise the effects of other causes. Such are all acts of moral virtue, and external duties of religion. Hence it is that heathen, who have no faith at all, have performed the former; and hypocrites, who have no true faith, the latter. So that, though from hence we may conclude negatively, he that doth not these things hath no faith, yet we cannot affirmatively, because we do such things therefore we are in Christ, and believe in him.

[2.] Others, which are only the effects of a right faith, but yet such as faith produceth not but when in strength. Of this sort are the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, magnanimity in afflictions, and desires of dissolution. From these we may conclude affirmatively, but not negatively, he that can act these duties doth know Christ, but every one that knoweth Christ cannot act these duties.

[3.] Finally, other effects there are which flow from faith only and always, which it is as natural for faith to produce as for the sun to shine, or the fire to burn. Such are these my text speaketh of, a sincere obedience, and a conscientious imitation of Christ. From whence we may infer both ways, and so the proposition will be reciprocally true: Every one who keepeth the commandment, knoweth Christ; who walketh as Christ walked, is in him; and every one who knoweth

\* Aug. de Trin., lib. xiii. cap. 2. † Id. in Ps. cxlix.

Christ, keepeth the commandments, is in Christ, and walketh as he walked.

Put then both these considerations together, we may know that we keep the commandments, and if we keep the commandments we may assure ourselves that we know Christ; no wonder if our apostle say, Hereby we know we know him. We may perceive whether we walk as Christ walked or no; and if we walk as Christ walked, we may be confident we are in him. No marvel if our apostle say, Hereby we know that we are in him. The strength of this argumentation will the better appear if we reduce it to a syllogism, which may be thus framed:—

Whoever keepeth the commandments knoweth Christ;

Whoso walketh as Christ walked, is in him;

But I keep the commandments, and walk as Christ walked;

Therefore I know Christ, and am in him.

The first of these, which is the *major*, we know by a certainty of faith, as being expressly asserted in this and other scriptures. The second, which is the *minor*, we know by a certainty of experience, finding these qualifications wrought in us; and thus, knowing the premises, we infer the conclusion, and so, by a certainty of faith joined with experience, we are able to assert our interest in Christ.

3. This knowledge which we have hereby, doth not exclude the testimony of the Spirit. It is St Paul's assertion, Rom. viii. 16, that 'the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.' Yea, St John, in the last chapter of this epistle, ver. 7, plainly ascribeth this office of bearing witness to the Spirit; and yet it is no less true, that these qualifications do bear the same witness; these two witnesses being the one subservient to the other, whilst the Spirit is the principal, and these qualifications are the Spirit's instrument in this work. Whether there be an immediate testimony given by the Spirit to the soul of a believer, assuring him of his interest in Christ, I will not now dispute. That the Spirit can thus testify, is not to be questioned; and that, at some times, to some eminent saints he hath been and may still be pleased to vouchsafe it, will not be denied; but, doubtless, the usual way of the Spirit's witnessing is by the grace of sanctification imprinted on the heart, and expressed in the life.

To this testimony the Spirit concurrereth, especially two ways, partly by implanting his graces in us, in which respect they are called 'the fruits of the Spirit,' Gal. v. 22, and partly by discovering them to us; in which regard St Paul saith, 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God.' The truth is, as we cannot have grace without the Spirit's operation, so neither can we discern it but by the Spirit's irradiation; and, as the beauty of all colours is manifested by the light of the sun, so is

the truth of all graces in the heart by the Spirit's light.

By all which, it appeareth that the Spirit is the chief in this work; so that as if you ask how we know that we know Christ, and are in him? the answer is, By keeping the commandments, and walking as Christ walked. So if you ask, how we are enabled to keep the commandments, and walk as Christ walked, and how we are to know that we do thus walk and keep the commandments? the answer is, By the Spirit.

To close up this with a double consecutory.

1. That assurance of an interest in Christ which many pretend to, who walk contrary to him and his precepts in their lives, is not a Christian knowledge, but a vain confidence, a carnal security, a lying delusion, and a damned presumption. To all such, therefore, who hug sin in their bosoms, and yet suppose they are folded in Christ's arms, who sail with full speed to hell, and yet think to cast anchor at heaven gates; who live in rebellion against, and yet promise to themselves salvation by, Christ; we say not, 'Rejoice with trembling,' but Tremble without rejoicing; not 'Work out your salvation with fear,' but Fear without any hope of salvation in this condition. And whereas such persons may perhaps plead an immediate testimony of God's Spirit, assuring them that they are in Christ, we are bold to tell them, it is an hissing of the old serpent, not a whispering of the good Spirit; it is the voice of the devil, not of God. Ah, my brethren, we sometimes pity mad persons whom we see lying in the straw, clad in rags, and yet hear them boasting themselves to be kings and queens. Have we not as great, nay, far more reason to pity our own madness, in fancying to ourselves we are in Christ, washed by his blood, and made kings and priests to God, whenas we transgress his laws, and cast both his precepts and pattern behind our back. Methinketh when men who live in adultery, fornication, covetousness, envy, rebellion, or any work of the flesh, promise to themselves an interest in Christ, their sins should presently look them in the face and tell them that they are none of Christ's.

2. It nearly concerneth us all to search our hearts and try our ways, to inquire into the obedience and conformity of our conversations, that hereby we may know we are in Christ. It is an excellent saying of St Bernard,\* *Quantum crescis in gratiam, tantum dilataris in fiduciam*, according to the measure of our obedience, so is the measure of our confidence; if, therefore, we would strengthen the latter, we must by due inquiry assure ourselves of the former. Ah, my brethren, it is an easy matter for a man to say, I know I am in Christ; but it is no easy matter to say, Hereby I know I am in him. What is it for a man to brag that such and such lands and lordships are his, unless he can shew his evidences? These qualifications are the evidences of our title to Christ; and what will it avail to lay a claim to Christ, if we

\* Pern. Sermon. iii. in Cant.



have not these to shew? Oh, then, what need is there of a diligent search, that we may find these qualifications in us, and because *in nihilo facilius et periculosius erratur*, there is nothing wherein we may more easily, and yet more dangerously, be mistaken than in this enquiry, oh, what need is there of a due care, that there may be no flaw in our evidence, that our qualification be of a right stamp!

To this end, study carefully the directions of the word, pray fervently for the illumination of the Spirit, consult not with flesh and blood, hearken not to the suggestions of Satan, but deal impartially with thy own soul, as knowing of how great concernment the right managing of this work is.

And now, upon serious and deliberate search,

1. On the one hand, canst thou not find these qualifications in thee? Be not too hasty in passing a determinate sentence against thyself, since, though these graces be necessary effects, yet they are not necessary signs of faith; and therefore they may be in us, and so we truly in Christ, and yet not appear, so as we to know either that they are in us, or we in Christ. Perhaps thou art at that time clouded with some violent passion, assaulted with some virulent temptation, under spiritual desertion; and no wonder if in such a case thou be not able to see those graces which yet thou hast; since, though there be fire, yet so long as it is hid in the embers it cannot flame forth, nor doth it appear to be there. Besides the operating, there must be (as you have heard) a discovering work of the Spirit. By the former, faith bringeth these graces forth as effects; by the latter, a believer maketh use

of them as signs, and these two do not always go together. Indeed, if thou manifestly find the contrary vices reigning in thee, thou mayest and oughtest to conclude thyself as yet to be without Christ; but though thou canst not clearly apprehend the in-being of these graces, thou must not peremptorily conclude against thy being in Christ, but rather hanging, as it were, between hope and fear, wait and pray, and search for further discovery.

2. On the other hand, dost thou find the truth of these qualifications in thee? Bless thy God, know thy bliss, own thy privilege, and labour after greater measures of this apprehension; since as he that only hopes he keepeth the commandments, can only hope that he knoweth Christ, so he that knoweth and is assured he keepeth them, may know and be assured that he knoweth Christ.

I shut up all with one caution. In your endeavours after the reflex, forget not the direct acts of faith. Look upon Christ as he who is your righteousness to justify you; and then look upon your obedience as that which may testify to you that you are justified by him; even then, when you cannot clearly discover inherent qualifications, cast not away wholly your confidence in Christ's merits; and when you do discover them, rest not in them, but only in Christ's merits, ever remembering that it is the being in Christ by faith which entitleth you to justification and salvation; and your keeping the commandments, and walking as Christ walked, is that which manifesteth the truth of your faith, by which you are in Christ, by whom you are justified, and shall at last be saved.

## SERMON XXVII.

*Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which you had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him: but he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.—1 JOHN II. 7-11.*

IT was St Paul's sage and sacred advice to Timothy, 1 Tim. ii. 13, 'Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus:' where these words, *faith and love* are by some, and not unfitly, referred to the manner of holding, these being the two hands by which we hold fast the truth; but by others, and no less probably, they are referred to the form of sound words which he heard of him, the matter of the form, the substance of those words being reducible to those two heads. Suitable hereunto is that paraphrase of Theophilact,\* in faith and love, *τυτιστασι οι λογοι μου και περι πιστεως και αγαπης διαγορευουσιν*, that is, My words

\* Theoph. in loc.

and discourses are conversant about faith and love. What he saith concerning St Paul's, we may concerning St John's, words in this epistle, all of which tend either to the enlightening of our faith, or inflaming of our love; the latter of which our apostle begins with at these verses, 'Brethren, I write no new commandment,' &c.

Which words consist of two general parts:

A preamble inviting, in the 7th and 8th verses;

A doctrine instructing, in the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses.

I. Our apostle, intending to spend a great part of this epistle in a discourse of love, doth not unfitly begin it with a preface; especially considering that

the end of an exordium is *capture benevolentiam*, to gain love both to the orator and his matter.

In this preamble there are two things considerable:

The kind appellation our apostle giveth those to whom he wrote, in the first word, *brethren*;

The large commendation he giveth of the doctrine about which he was to write, in the rest of the words.

That which first occurreth to be handled is the kind appellation, *brethren*. The vulgar Latin, following the Syriac, read it *Charissimi*, 'dearly beloved;' and Grocius finds *ἀγαπῆται*, in one Greek manuscript. Indeed, either is very suitable. To shew that he himself was not a stranger to that love he would teach them, he might fitly call them *dearly beloved*; and being to treat of brotherly love, he no less aptly useth the style of *brethren*; so that it is not much material which way we read it; but because the other phrase of *dearly beloved* is used afterward, and the most Greek copies here read *ἀδελφοί*, I shall handle that reading which our translation following renders, *brethren*.

It is a title that is very considerable upon several accounts, especially these four. Inasmuch as it is a word of verity, of humility, of charity, of dignity. There was really such a relation between St John and those to whom he wrote. The mentioning it by the apostle argueth in him a spirit of love\* and lowliness, and much advanceth the honour of those to whom he wrote.

1. It is a word of verity. Indeed, it is somewhat strange how this should be true. If you cast your eyes on the first verse of this chapter, you find him calling them children; and how is it possible they should at once be his brethren and his children? If they were his brethren, he and they must be children of one father; if they were his children, he must be their father; and these two cannot consist together. The truth is, these relations in a natural way and a proper notion are altogether incompatible between the same persons; and yet this hinders not but that, in a spiritual and Scripture sense, both these are verified of St John, in reference to those to whom he wrote. Know, then, that the sacred penman of this epistle may be considered under a threefold latitude: as an apostle, as a Christian, as a man.

(1.) Consider him as an *apostle*, invested by Christ with authority to publish the gospel, whereby they were converted to the faith; so he was their father, and might therefore call them his children. But,

(2.) Consider him as a *Christian*, embracing the same faith with them which he preached to them; so he and they were brethren. They who have the same father and mother are undoubtedly brethren. Now, the apostles, as Christians, had God to their father, and the catholic church to their mother, and therefore brethren to all, even ordinary Christians. In this respect it is that St Peter, giving thanks to God for

\* Qui de charitate præcepta traditurus erat à charitate non alienus.—Justin. in Ep.

this mercy of regeneration, 1 Pet. i. 3, useth a pronoun of the first person plural: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten,' not me or you, or me and you, but 'us again to a lively hope;' thereby intimating that he and they were all the children of God, and that by the same means of the new birth; and St Paul, writing to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. x. 17, maketh himself one of the number when he saith, 'We being many are one body;' and again, xii. 3, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,' thereby implying, that he and they stand in the same relation to the church.

This relation is that which is not between every minister and his people. On the one hand, sometimes the minister himself is not a brother, because a profane, wicked person; yea, in this respect, he may be able to say, *my children!* and yet not *my brethren!* For since the spiritual birth dependeth upon the energy of the seed, which is the word accompanied with the Spirit, not at all upon the goodness of him that dispenseth it, it is not impossible for an unregenerate person to beget others to the faith, and so the minister may be a father and not a brother. On the other hand, oftentimes a great part of the people remain in a state of sin and impenitency; in which regard good ministers have too oft just reason to complain, that, when they have many auditors, they have but few brethren. Indeed, whereas these two relations, in a carnal alliance, are inconsistent in this spiritual kindred, they one make way for the other. Auditors, by becoming the children, are also the brethren, of their faithful pastors. Thus, when we ourselves are begotten again to God, and we are instruments to beget you again, you and we are brethren. Happy the people who have such a minister, happy the minister who hath such a people. Then is there the sweetest harmony, when there is this spiritual affinity between them.

(3.) And, lastly, consider him as a man sprouting from the same root, and made of the same mould with them; so in a natural way, according to a large notion, he and they were brethren. It was Moses his prediction to the Jews concerning Christ: Deut. xviii. 15, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; him shall you hear.' And as Christ himself, so his apostles whom he raised up to publish his gospel, and their successors who are sent about this work, have still been the people's brethren. Moschus relateth a story of an abbot,\* who was checked by a deacon for some error in holy administrations, whilst he saw angels standing by. He, supposing the angels would have rebuked him if he had done anything amiss, slighted the deacon's admonition. The deacon continuing his reproof, the abbot addresseth himself to the angels, *Quare vos non dixistis mihi?* Why have not you checked me? To whom they returned this

\* Mosch. de vit. patr. l. x. c. 149.



answer, *Deus ita disposuit ut homines ab hominibus corrigantur*, God hath so ordered it that men should be convicted and instructed by men, who are their brethren.

We have a great deal of reason herein to take notice of God's merciful condescension, in teaching us by men like to ourselves. When God was pleased to speak by himself, it was so terrible that the people could not endure it. When God was at any time pleased to send angels of his errand, it caused amazement in the minds of them to whom they were sent; but, speaking to us by our brethren, men as we are, we are comforted and encouraged. Doubtless it had been more congruous to the majesty of God and sublimity of his message, that those glorious angels should have been the dispensers of it; but surely it was more correspondent to our weakness, and thereby to his goodness, that men should be the conduits to convey this water of life to us. And now, beloved, let not this goodness of God be to us an occasion of contempt; far be it, oh far be it from us to regard the message the less because they are men, our brethren, who bring it. He wanted not other ways of making himself known to the children of men, but this was most expedient for us, and therefore let it be matter of gratulation to us; and if, at any time, our corrupt hearts shall prompt mean thoughts of the word, because of the meanness of the ambassadors, let us remember that it is *verbum patris*, though *in ore fratris*, the gospel of God, though spoken by man; the word of our Father, though in the mouth of a brother.

2. It is a word of humility. Brotherhood is a relation of equality; all brethren (except the elder brother) are alike; Christ is the elder brother, so that the apostle, in calling the Christians his brethren, maketh them, as it were, equal to himself. Oh what humility lodged in the hearts of those holy apostles! No doubt, as apostles, they were above the rest in place and power, office and dignity, in which respect St John before calls them *children*, a relation that argueth a superiority in him over them; and yet such was the lowliness of their minds that they looked upon themselves as but equal; and therefore this apostle here, and the rest frequently in their epistles, use this term *brethren*; nay, as if this were not low enough, St Paul mentioneth a relation that argueth an inferiority in the apostles to the people, 2 Cor. iv. 5, where he useth that religious compliment to the Corinthians, 'ourselves, your servants for Jesus' sake.' This lowliness of mind was that which, according to Christ's command, they learned of him. It is very observable, that, though Christ was their Lord and master, yet he calls them 'not servants but friends,' a word of parity; yea, he entitles them to this very relation, when he said to Mary Magdalene, 'Go to my brethren;' and if Christ were pleased to call them, well might they call those who were their disciples brethren.

Oh let the same mind be in all the ministers of the gospel! Pride is odious in any, but especially in Christ's

ambassadors. As St Paul saith, Philem. 8, 9, 'Though I might enjoin, I rather beseech,' so, though we may challenge superiority and authority, yet let us rather condescend to a way of equality, yea, if need be, inferiority. We must keep up the honour of our office, but still express the humility of our minds; in respect of heavenly-mindedness we must be as the hills, of lowly-mindedness as the valleys. Let us not think much to sit in the hinder part of the ship, so we may steer the course of it to heaven. How willingly should we bespeak the people as our brethren, nay, masters, so we can but gain them to be Christ's servants! Only let me add one caution: the humility of the minister must not be an occasion of contempt from the people; yea, give me leave to tell you, whilst we are ready to be commanded by you, you ought readily to obey us, and it becometh you to reverence us as fathers whilst we call you brethren.

3. It is a word of amity. It is not unworthy our observation, that the holy apostles are of all others most frequent in this style of *brethren*, and that no doubt for this reason, because it is a term at once both free from pride and full of love. Great is the love which hath been between brethren, nor can any relation afford higher examples than this. Brotherly love hath exceeded parental. A Persian that wept not for his child's did for his brother's death, saying, I may have more children, but not brethren! So that our apostle here calling them brethren no doubt intends to let them see how kindly affectioned he was towards them. Such is the affection which the ministers of Christ have ever had towards their people; thus did St Paul love the Corinthians when he saith, 2 Cor. vi. 11, 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged!' and the Thessalonians when he saith, 1 Thess. ii. 8, 'Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.' Thus did St Ambrose love his charge,\* when he declareth how much he was troubled at his absence from them, though upon just occasion. It were easy to multiply instances of this nature. Oh let all pastors take fire at these flames, and learn by these examples; indeed, there is no relation in which ministers stand to their people but it calls for this duty. If they look on them as their sheep, their scholars, their children, their brethren, all engage them to love.

And surely, *maques amoris amor*, love is the loadstone of love; if we love you, you must love us as brethren. So did those converts who bespake the apostles with this very title, 'Men and brethren,' Acts ii. 37. Tell me, I beseech you, why should we be accounted as your enemies, who watch for your souls? If you think scorn to honour us as fathers, yet however own us as brethren.

In a word, since we are brethren, let us sweetly live

\* Ambr. Serm. i. de Temp.

and love as brethren. 'Oh how pleasant a thing it is' for ministers and people, like 'brethren, to dwell together in unity!' Oh that both priest and people, when any contentions arise between them, or when their love to each other begins to fail in them, would remember this relation, so should the meditation hereof be both as water and fire, as water to cool the heat of contention, as fire to kindle and cherish the heat of affection.

4. It is a word of dignity, that he who was in the highest office belonging to the Christian church should call the despised Christians to whom he wrote his brethren. As it is a dignation in him, so it must needs be an exaltation to them. The greater the persons to whom we are related, and the nearer the relation is, the greater is the honour. To be a servant, a kinsman, but much more to be a brother of a lord, or earl, but much more, of a king, is a very great dignity. Such honour have Christians: they may claim brotherhood to the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, the sacred hierarchy of the apostles, yea, the head of the church, Christ himself; for so saith the author to the Hebrews concerning him, Heb. ii. 11, 'He is not ashamed to call us brethren.'

Oh let us walk worthy of these high relations which Christianity conferreth upon us, and so much the rather, because by our unanswerable behaviour to these relations we shall not only dishonour ourselves, but them to whom we are related. If one that is brother to a king should make himself a companion of thieves, doth it not redound to the dishonour of the king to whom he is so nearly allied? And if we, who, by our Christian profession, pretend at least alliance to the apostles, yea, Christ himself, shall live no better, nay, worse, than Turks, pagans, infidels, how must they suffer to whom we pretend so near a relation? And therefore (to imitate the apostle's exhortation), 'let our conversation be such as becometh' the brethren of those holy apostles, who were the first publishers of the gospel of Christ. And so much be spoken of the compellation given to the persons.

Pass we on to the commendation which our apostle here giveth the matter whereabout he was now to write, which is drawn from three heads:

I. The authority of it, as being a precept both old and new, in those words, 'I write no new but an old commandment,' &c.; and 'Again a new commandment I write to you.'

II. The conformity of it to the pattern which Christ hath set, in those words, 'A thing which is true in him.'

III. The congruity of it to the state of the gospel, the truth of Christianity, in those words, 'And in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.'

I. The authority of that which our apostle here commendeth is that which we are to begin with, and that inasmuch as it is

1. An old commandment. This is that which is both propounded and proved, the former in those words, 'I write not a new but an old commandment to you;' the latter in those, 'Which you heard from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.'

The proposition is set down with a great deal of emphasis, not only positively, but oppositively, affirmatively, but negatively. The apostle doth not content himself to say, I write to you an old commandment, but knowing (as Calvin\* well noteth) how suspected novelty is and deservedly hateful, and because, as Didymus observeth, the brand of novelty, both by Jews and pagans, was cast on Christianity, and withal because many things are old which yet in truth are but old innovations (as I shall hereafter discover), he doth expressly vindicate his doctrine from any such aspersion, by this addition, Not a new but an old commandment.

It is somewhat debated by interpreters, what our apostle intends by this old commandment. Whilst some understand it generally of the whole evangelical doctrine, others refer it to the preceding verse, where is a special command of walking as Christ walked; others to that particular command of love, which immediately followeth. This last I incline to, and so much the rather because I find St John himself so expounding it in the 11th verse of the next chapter, wherein he calls loving one another 'the message from the beginning,' and at the 5th verse of the next epistle, where he saith, 'Not as though I wrote a new commandment,' and this concerning the precept of loving one another.

That I may the better despatch this clause, be pleased to proceed with me by these steps:

1. The doctrine which our apostle was now about to propose is called a *commandment*; whence observe,

(1.) Generally, that as the law had gospel, so the gospel hath law in it; and as it publisheth promises, so it obligeth by precepts. It is the difference between promises and commands, that the one importeth some good to be done for us, and the other some good to be done by us; the one informeth us what God will do, and the other what we should do. Now, though the principal end of the gospel be to declare the one, yet so as that it teaches the other; for this reason it is, no doubt, that the gospel is sometimes called by the name of law, as where we read of the 'law of faith,' Rom. iii. 27, and the 'law of Christ,' Gal. vi. 2, and the 'law of liberty,' James i. 25, and the 'law of the Spirit of life,' Rom. viii. 2; and upon the same account the apostle Paul calls it a canon, Gal. vi. 16, or a rule to which our lives must be conformed, and by which our ways are to be directed; and St Peter styleth it the 'holy commandment,' 2 Pet. ii. 21, from which apostates turn, and 'the grace of God,' which many interpret (by a metonymy of the object)

\* Didym. Calv. in loc.



to be the gospel, is said to 'teach,' Tit. ii. 11, being as well a schoolmaster as a comforter. Finally, in this respect it is that we read not only of 'believing the gospel,' which layeth hold on the promises, but 'obeying,' which conformeth to the precepts of Christ, the non-performance of which is threatened with a miserable end by St Peter, 1 Peter iv. 17, and with vengeance to be rendered in flaming fire by St Paul, 2 Thes. i. 8.

True it is, that whereas the law did only command, the gospel enableth as well as commandeth; nor doth it only *jubere quod placet*, but *dare quod jubet*, prescribe what we are to do, but strengthens us to do what is prescribed. Yet still the evangelical doctrine consists of commands as well as comforts. Let not, then, carnal gossellers deceive themselves by fancying a gospel altogether made up of mercy, since such an one must needs be *ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον*, another gospel than Christ or his apostles taught, and so must needs prove *ψευδὲς εὐαγγέλιον*, a lying gospel, such as will fail those that trust in it.

(2.) Particularly, that the doctrine of love is a commandment. There is a great deal of difference between allowing and commanding; that only implieth a *may*, but this a *must*; that a *licet*, it is lawful, this an *oportet*, it is needful to be done. Of this latter sort is love, as being that which all Christians are not only warranted but enjoined to practise. When, therefore, at any time our corrupt natures or satanical suggestions put us upon anything which is contrary to love, let us refell it with this consideration: It is a command which I dare not violate, and (as St Paul saith in another ease) 'a necessity is laid upon me' for the observance of it.

2. Our apostle having before called upon those to whom he wrote to keep the commandments, proceeds to shew them what the command was he would have them especially to keep; no doubt hereby intending to prevent an objection which might otherwise be made. St John having set down keeping the commandments as the only mark of knowing Christ, it might be inquired, O holy apostle, what are those commandments which thou wouldst have us to keep? for prevention of which, he lets them know what was the old and new commandment which they were chiefly to keep, namely, love.

A practice deservedly imitable by all ministers, who must not content themselves with generalities, but descend to particulars. As we call upon the people to do their duty, so we must inform them in the duties which they are to do. Thus the prophet Micah doth not only exhort the people to obedience, but sheweth them 'what the Lord required of them,' Micah vi. 8, namely, 'to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.' Thus our blessed Saviour not only requireth his disciples to 'come after' him, but instructs them in what it consists, Mat. xvi. 24, namely, the 'denying of themselves, taking up the cross and

following' his pattern, and elsewhere inciting them to learn of him, specifieth in what, to wit, meekness and lowliness. The truth is, whilst we only in general terms stir up men to believe and repent, and serve God and do the commandments, but instruct them not wherein the practice of those duties consists, they will be very apt to deceive themselves, and the devil will help to persuade them that they do them, whenas they are far short of them. That preaching is likely to be most effectual which is most punctual, in describing as well as prescribing, as here St John doth in his writing.

3. Whereas the apostle before useth the plural number, the *commandments*, here he changeth it into the singular, and saith, I write a *commandment*; and perhaps for this reason, to intimate that in this one which he was now to write about, all the commandments are contained, so as in keeping this one we keep all. Indeed, what else are the commandments, but love enlarged? and what is love, but the commandments contracted? St Paul writing to Timothy saith, 'The end of the commandment is charity,' 1 Tim. i. 5, this being the final cause to which every command tends; and the practice of this, as it were, the formal cause, the impletiou and perfection of every command. To this purpose is that of St Gregory, when he asserteth,\* *Omne mandatum de solâ dilectione est, et omnia unum præceptum sunt, quia quicquid præcipitur in solâ charitate solidatur*, all the commandments are but one, and that the command of love, love being as it were the one root out of which all other duties, as so many branches, sprout forth. And surely we have great cause to take notice of God's goodness herein, who having absolute power to command what he pleaseth, is pleased to command nothing but love. And as Naaman's servant said in another case to him, 2 Kings v. 13, 'If the prophet had commanded thee a greater thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much more when he saith Wash and be clean?' so (my brethren) if God had imposed more or harder precepts upon us, would we not have obeyed them? How much more when he only obligeth us to love!

4. This commandment of love, about which our apostle was to write, is commended from this, that it is not a new but an old commandment; where observe,

(1.) In general, the commandment which the apostle enjoineth by writing to these Christians, is not new but old. It is Tertullian's observation concerning all the apostles,† *Nec ipsi quicquam ex arbitrio suo quod inducerent elegerunt*, how that they did not prescribe any commandment of their own invention to the church; and surely then it is a fit *item*, both for us ministers what doctrines to deliver, and you the people what commandments to receive, such as are not new but old. The newest philosophy may excel, as having the advantage of new experiments, but the

\* Greg. hom. in Evang. 27.

† Tert. de præscript. adv. hæc.

eldest divinity is the best. That of Solomon, Prov. xvi. 31, 'An hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness,' may in this case be inverted; it is a crown of glory to the way of truth, that it is always found with an hoary head; *καρός* and *κρός* are near of sound, and they agree in sense. New doctrines are vain at best, yea, too often dangerous; and therefore saith Zanchy well,\* *Nihil novum in religione admittendum*, nothing of novelty is to be admitted in religion; and to the same purpose Lyrinensis,† *Vitanda est novitas, tenenda antiquitas*, shun new paths, and keep the beaten track. The Christian faith is not *quotidie inventa*, still to be newly invented, but *semel tradita*, 'once delivered' to the saints, which we must earnestly contend for, Jude 3. Indeed, new illustrations of old doctrines are attainable. *Fas est ut prisca celestis philosophiæ dogmata limentur, poliantur, non ut commulentur*, saith the fore-mentioned author, it is lawful for us to put new trimmings upon those old garments, to handle the old doctrines in a new method, illustrate them by new similitudes, but still the same truth for substance must be retained and maintained by us.

By this which hath been said, we may see what reason there is to exclaim against the madness of this generation. *Mirari satis nequeo* (said Lyrinensis of the men in his‡ days; we may no less truly of those in ours), I cannot enough wonder at the impiety of those blind minds, which, not being contented with anciently received truths, are always either adding, or detracting, or changing some way or other, introducing somewhat that is new. That which here St John sets down as a commendation, is now become an accusation, he preacheth nothing but what is old. The voice of those in the Psalms is, *Quis ostendet bonum?* 'Who will shew us any good?' Ps. iv. 6; the cry of this age, *Quis ostendet novum?* Who will shew us anything that is new? Our proud women are not more for new fashions, than both men and women for new fancies. But surely if that which our apostle wrote was not new but old, they who vent not old but new are false apostles. Upon this account it was that Irenæus, inveighing against heretics,§ maketh this one character of them, *affectant per singulos dies novum quicquam adinventire quod nunquam quisquam excogitavit*, they affect to broach somewhat new which was not heard of before; and to the same purpose St Austin|| giveth a definition of a heretic: he is one *qui, alicujus temporalis commodi et vance gloria causa, novas opinioniones vel gignit vel sequitur*, who for secular advantage or vain-glory's sake, doth either invent or uphold some new doctrine. And to name no more, Origen observeth concerning heretics,¶ that they marry themselves *extraneo verbo*, to a foreign and so some

new word, altogether alien from that which is contained in the holy Scriptures.

And, therefore, (my brethren) take ye heed of them who publish, according to Tertullian's phrase concerning Marcion,\* *hesternum evangelium*, a gospel that is of yesterday, who change their faith and doctrine with the moon every month, and are as it were sceptics in divinity. Remember (I beseech you) who it is that soweth the new tares among the good corn, Mat. xiii. 25, even the envious man. Observe, I pray you, whither those men wander, who (as Ghisterius† his phrase is), *antiquâ dimissâ per novam gradiuntur viam*, leaving the ancient path, seek new ways. It is seldom that he who is taken off his old and sure basis setteth anywhere, but is tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, falling away from truth to error, from error to heresy, from that to blasphemy, and at last to atheism. 'Remove not then the ancient landmarks.' It is Solomon's ingeminated counsel, Prov. xxii. 28, xxiii. 10, no doubt to be understood literally, but yet such as is applied allusively, by the ancients to this present matter, *terminos antiquos dicit terminos veritatis et fidei, quos statuerunt ab initio catholici doctores*, he calls the old doctrines embraced by the catholic doctors, the ancient landmarks, saith Salazar.‡ Let us not dare to remove them; yea, 'if an angel from heaven,' (as St Paul speaketh, Gal. i. 8,) 'shall preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.' In one word, let the obedience which we yield to the commandments be a new obedience; but the commandments to which we yield obedience must be, not new, but old. Such was this concerning which the holy apostle here writeth.

(2.) In special, yet further and lastly, take notice that the commandment of love is not a new, but an old commandment. Many, indeed, are the topics whence this commandment of love might justly be commended; and among others this is not the least, that it is grey-headed, and of ancient institution. There are some things to which oldness is a disparagement, an old garment past mending, an old house past repairing, an old ship past rigging; but then there are other things of which oldness is a praise, old coins, manuscripts, monuments, buildings, have a face of honour upon them. It is a great dignity for a man to be descended of an ancient house; no wonder if this command of love be therefore honourable, because it is an old commandment.

The truth of this which is here attributed to love, will best appear by the proof which is annexed, and is next to be handled. For the present we will take it for granted, and let the improvement of it be to render this command of love the more amiable and acceptable to us.

Indeed, were it a new precept, and the imposition of it but of yesterday, we might have some reluc-

\* Zanch. in loc.

† Vincent. Lyrin. adv. hæ. cap. 30.

‡ Ibid. cap. 26. § Iren. lib. i. cap. 18.

|| Aug. opusc. de util. cred. cap. i.

¶ Orig. hom. 22. in Matth.

\* Tertul. adv. Marc.

† Ghister. in Cant.

‡ Salazar. ibid.



tancy against it, *haud facile insuetum jugum suscipimus*, saith Calvin\* well. Men do not easily undertake a yoke to which they are not accustomed, but this yoke is no other than what was of old imposed. It is well observed by an historian, the laws which at first were exceedingly harsh and heavy, by force of custom become not only tolerable, but light and easy. Hereupon one compareth customs to a king, and edicts to a tyrant; because we are subject voluntarily to the one, but upon necessity to the other. To this purpose Herodotus reporteth, that Darius having under his dominion certain Grecians of Asia, who had a custom of burning their dead friends, and certain

\* Calvin in loc.

Indians who used to eat them, he called the Grecians and would have them to conform to the Indians; afterward he called the Indians, and would have them to conform to the Grecians, but found both very unwilling to leave the usage of their country, so tenacious are men of old customs.\* Oh, then, my brethren, since this command is such as hath always been a custom among the saints, and hath upon it the stamp of antiquity, let it be embraced and practised by us with the more readiness and alacrity. And so much for the point itself; it remaineth, I now proceed to the proof; 'it is from the beginning.' But the time being past, commands me to end, and reserve that to the next opportunity.

\* Chrysost. orat. 76. Suid in dicti. *idos*.

### SERMON XXVIII.

*Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*—1 JOHN II. 7, 8.

EVERY scribe instructed for the kingdom of heaven' (saith our blessed Saviour), Mat. xiii. 52, 'is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasury things new and old;' an excellent similitude, representing to us the properties of a good preacher. The householder hath his treasury, where provision is laid up; the preacher, his storehouse of divine knowledge. The householder doth not hoard up but bring forth what he hath in his treasury for the use of his family; the preacher, being furnished with abilities, employeth them for the church's good. The things which the householder bringeth forth out of his treasury are both new and old: all sorts of provision, both of the present and former years' growth; the doctrines which the preacher delivereth are either (according to Brugensis) the new and glorious mysteries of the gospel, in old and common resemblances, or (according to St Hilary and the ancients\*) *Nova et vetera, in evangelis et in lege*, the legal and evangelical verities. According to this is that occasional note of St Ambrose† upon those words of the spouse, Cant. vii. 13, 'At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.' *Teneo mandata omnia noviet veteris Testamenti*, I keep the commandments both of the Old and New Testament; for whereas the Jewish synagogue neither keep the New in the letter nor the Old in the spirit, the Christian church observeth both, and instructeth her children in both. Suitable hereunto it is that this great apostle of the Christian church, and well-instructed scribe for the kingdom of heaven, brought forth in his preaching, and here layeth up a

writing both old and new, chiefly pressing upon us the observance of a command, both legal and evangelical: 'Brethren, I write no new, but an old,' &c. 'Again, a new commandment I write unto you.'

2. Having despatched the compellation *brethren*, we have entered upon the first branch of the commendation, drawn from its divine authority, and therein the consideration of it as an old commandment, which, having been already handled in the assertion, we are now to proceed to the probation, as it is implicitly couched in these words, 'which we had from the beginning,' and explicitly set forth in these, 'the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.'

That you may see the strength of the argument, I shall form it into a syllogism, thus:

That which you heard and had from the beginning is the old commandment; but

This commandment, about which I write unto you, is that you heard and had from the beginning;

Therefore, it is not a new but an old commandment.

The conclusion is the assertion, and hath been already handled; the *major* and *minor* contain the probation, and remain now to be despatched.

1. Begin we with the *major*, 'The old commandment is the word which was heard from the beginning.' To clear this, be pleased to know that a thing may be said to be old, either *κατὰ τὴν*, or *ἀπλῶς*, in some respects only, or absolutely. That which is not from the beginning, and therefore is new in respect of preceding times, may yet in respect of following ages be said to be old; but only what is from the beginning is absolutely old. Antiquity properly referreth to time, so that what hath the priority carrieth it in point of

\* Brug. Hilary in Mat. † Ambros. in Ps. cxviii. Oct 22

antiquity, and *id prius quod ab initio* (saith Tertullian)\* that is first which is from the beginning; *principium*, a beginning, being *id quo nihil prius*, that before which nothing is, else it could not be the beginning. In this sense it is we most justly say, that which is true is old, for though error may be old, truth cannot be new; yea, since, as that fore-mentioned father excellently argueth,† *falsum est corruptio veri*, falsehood is nothing else but an adulteration of truth, truth must needs be before falsehood; and so the terms are convertible, that which is true is old, and that which is old is true, for no error but is new in respect of that which is from the beginning, though it be old in regard of that which followeth. Upon this account it is that the same father, disputing with Marcion,‡ put it to this issue, 'I say my gospel is true; Marcion saith his is. I say Marcion's gospel is false; he saith mine is. *Quis inter nos determinabit nisi temporis ratio, ei præscribens auctoritatem quod antiquius reperietur*; let antiquity end the controversy; that which can shew largest prescription of time, and so the eldest, let it be accounted truest. Indeed, Christianity stands upon holy antiquity, and there is no better way of discovering what is false, and reforming what is amiss, than by looking back to the beginning.

Upon this ground it is that we contest both with the papists on the one, and all sectaries on the other hand, as being ready to justify against both, that what we teach is truly old, because the word from the beginning.

(1.) As the Gibeonites cheated Joshua with their old shoes clouted upon their feet, old garments, dry and mouldy bread, so do the papists delude many poor souls with pretence of the old commandment and the old religion. It is the calumny they cast upon us, Where was your religion before Luther? We are novelists, and but of yesterday; yea, that we daily broach new doctrines. That some (who are among us but not of us) do so, we cannot deny; but still we are ready to justify the doctrine of our church to be the old doctrine; nor do we desire a better medium of proving it than this in the text, 'The old commandment is the word which was from the beginning.' Take any or all of those opinions wherein we differ, and for which we separate from them, such as are transubstantiation, halfe communion, adoration of images, invocation of saints and angels, the supremacy and infallibility of the pope, and the like; and we shall find, even by their own confessions, that they were not from the beginning. Scotus acknowledgeth that, till the council of Lateran (which was almost 1200 years since Christ), transubstantiation was no article of faith. Cassander confesseth that for a thousand years the holy sacrament was administered in both kinds. It were easy to instance in the rest, but that learned

prelate\* hath already done it to the full; and now let any rational man judge whether we or they are to be charged with novelty, whenas those things, wherein they and we disagree, have no primitive antiquity to establish them.

(2.) As in this particular we vie with the papists, so are we ready to put the differences between us and the sectaries upon this trial. Do we contend for a liturgy in the church? Is it not because all churches, Greek and Latin, have had their liturgies from the first plantation of Christianity? Yea, Christ himself hath left a prayer upon record, to be not only a platform, after which manner he would have his disciples pray, but a set form which they were to say when they did pray. Do we contest for our hierarchy in the church? Is it not because it was so from the beginning? St Paul gave Timothy and Titus, single persons, episcopal power of ordaining, 1 Tim. v. 19, 22, and governing presbyters. Those angels of the seven churches, Rev. ii. iii., manifestly appear by the ecclesiastical history to be bishops; yea, no church since the apostles (till Calvin's time) hath been without episcopal government. Do we oppose the office of a lay ruling elder in the church? Is it not because it was not from the beginning? We can trace no footsteps of it in antiquity; nor yet any such officer or office described in holy writ. Finally, to name no more, do we plead for the baptizing of infants? Is it not because (as Origen and Austin assure us) it is a practice which the church received from the apostles?‡ And so an apostolical tradition which the more plainly appeareth, because in St Cyprian's time, though there was a controversy about baptizing infants upon the eighth day, yet the thing itself is supposed as a practice then in use; and though we do not read *totidem verbis* in the Scripture that the apostle baptized infants, yet it is very probable.† Whenas St Paul called the children of a believing parent holy, if he do not by the very phrase intend (as the learned Dr Hammond not improbably conceiveth), yet that he did allow, baptism to those children; and where we read that whole families were baptized, the children might be among the number. In one word, it is the glory of the church of England, that her doctrines are exactly consonant to universal and primitive antiquity; nor do we desire any other rule to examine them by than this, which here is laid down by our apostle, 'The old commandment is the word which we have heard from the beginning.'

2 To let this go, that which is chiefly to be considered is the *minor* of the syllogism, that the commandment of love was from the beginning. Now that

\* See Bp. Usher's answer to the Jesuits' challenge.

† Vide Euseb. Eccles. Hist.

‡ Ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem accepit parvulis dare baptismum.—Origen. in Rom. Consuetudo matris ecclesiæ non spernenda nec omnino credenda nisi apostolica esset traditio.—Aug. de Gen ad lit. cap xxiii.

\* Tert. contr. Marc. lib. iv. cap. iv.

† Id. ibid.

‡ Vide Tert. contr. Marc. lib. i. cap. xiii.



which would here be inquired into is, whence this beginning taketh its date? Indeed, *hæc vox pro materiâ substratâ variè accipi potest*, this word *beginning* may admit of a several reference, and I find no less than four several expositions of it here;\* all of which are not repugnant to, but consistent with, each other, from the beginning of their conversion, of Christian religion, of the Mosaical administration, and of the creation.

(1.) Some interpreters render the sense of the words thus: 'from the beginning,' that is, from the time you became Christians, † and first give up your names to Christ, and were called to the faith; according to which sense our apostle seemeth to assert, that one of the first lessons of Christianity is love. St Paul speaketh of milk for babes, and meat for strong men; intimating that there are some commandments and doctrines which are only fit for grown Christians; but this commandment of love, as it is meat for the strongest, so [it is milk for babes, Heb. v. 14.

(2.) Others give this construction of the words, from the beginning; that is, from the beginning of the gospel's publication, ever since the faith of Christ was made known to the world. ‡ Soon after Christian religion was revealed, there were many who endeavoured to bring in other gospels, but this commandment which St John wrote of was as old as Christianity; and what he delivered to them he received from Christ himself. In that sermon of Christ, which is first mentioned by the first of the evangelists, St Matthew, this precept of love is expressed, Mat. v. 6, 7; and in the last sermon that ever he preached, this lesson of love is commended to them, John xiii. 14, 15. And being taught by Christ himself, it must needs be from the beginning of Christianity.

(3.) Many take the date of this beginning a great deal higher, even as high as Moses: that which you Israelites had of old in the writings of Moses delivered to you; § so that we now give no other commandment in charge to you, than that which God commanded Moses and the prophets to preach. It is the exposition which I most incline to; for, since it is not improbable (as hath been already suggested) that those to whom this apostle wrote were, if not only, yet principally, the Jews; and the design of St John by these words being to prove that what he wrote was no new, but an old commandment, it is improbable that he would prove it by a date of not much above sixty years. Nor would it (especially to the Jews) have been any conviction of the antiquity of his doctrine, that it was from the beginning of Christian

religion; whenas, in their opinion, Christ's religion was new doctrine. Upon this ground it seemeth a more rational construction to refer this beginning to Moses; and our apostle could not use a more prevailing argument to the Jews, than by letting them know that the command he gave them was as old as Moses, and before enjoined by him. There is only one objection to be answered, that if this 'from the beginning' be taken so far off, how doth the apostle say, not only which you had, but which you heard; whereas this beginning was many hundred years before they were. But the learned Grotius has framed a fit answer to my hand,\* interpreting *vos* by *majores vestri*; you, that is, your ancestors, according as it is to be taken, where it is said, Mat. xxiii. 35, 'whom you slew,' and 'did not Moses give you the law?'

That, then, which according to this construction is here asserted, is, that the commandment of love was from the beginning of Moses, and required in the law as well as in the gospel. This is that which in some sense is granted by all, even the Socinians; but so as that they assert something to be added to it by Christ; and that, upon that account, it is called in the next verse, a new commandment. In what sense this epithet of *new* belongs to it, shall be by and by discovered. In the mean time, that which the orthodox assert, and I shall endeavour to make good, is, that the evangelical command of love was from the beginning of the law, and so nothing new enjoined by Christ which was not before by Moses.

To this end, be pleased to know that the command of love may be considered either *extensivè* or *intensivè*; extensively in regard of the object, or intensively in respect of the act. In both these respects, say the Socinians, Christ hath added to the law; for whereas, say they, the law requireth the Jews only to love their countrymen, their friends, the gospel requireth us to love our enemies, and so the extent of the object is larger. And whereas the law required only of the Jews an active love, the gospel requireth a passive, so far as to lay down our lives for the brethren. The chief ground on which they build the former is that of our Saviour: Mat. v. 43, 44, 'You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemies; but I say to you, Love your enemies;' and the foundation which they lay of the latter is, that the law commanded only to love their neighbours as themselves, Lev. xix. 18; but the gospel, to 'love one another, as Christ loved us,' John xiii. 34; which is in effect, to love others better than ourselves, by laying down our lives for them, which is more than the law required.

To enervate both these arguments, and establish the truth of the orthodox assertion, be pleased to know,

(1.) That *neighbour*, which is set down as the object of love in Moses his law, includeth *enemy* as well as *friend*.

\* Grot. *ibid*.

\* Cypr ad Fid Ep. 60. Vorst, in loc.

† Ab exordio quum Christiani estis effecti.—*Carthus.*  
Cum primum nomina Christo dedistis.—*Justin.*

‡ Ab initio evangelii.—*Est.* A primo religionis ingressu.—*Calvin.*

§ (Ecu., Aret., Fer., Grot., Heins., in loc.)

To clear this, I shall propose a double demand.

[1.] Whether is not neighbour to be taken in the same latitude, when it is said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour,' as when it is said, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour;' and again, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.' If this be denied, that will be enough to evince it, that the particular commands of the second table are but several explications of the general command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour;' and, therefore, it is the same neighbour to whom we must express our love, by not bearing false witness against him and the like. And if it be granted, then certainly *neighbour* must include *stranger*, nay, *enemy*; since the Jews were not to bear false witness against their enemies, or to covet unjustly what belonged to them. To this purpose is the note of a rabbin\* upon these words of the psalmist: Ps. xv. 3, 'He that doth no evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour,' understanding it of enemies as well as friends.

[2.] When our blessed Saviour repeated this law of Moses, Mat. xxii. 59, whether did not Christ understand it in the same sense with Moses? If he did not, then he affixed another sense to Moses his words than what he intended, which is not to be imagined. If he did, then either Moses meant them universally, or else Christ did not; and so Christ hath added nothing in this particular to Moses.

As for that passage in our Saviour's sermon, Mat. v. 43, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy,' it is doubtless to be understood (as Abulensis hath well noted) only as a tradition of the scribes and pharisees.† Indeed St Austin‡ and St Hilary§ seem to be of opinion, that hatred was allowed in the Old Testament; yea, Œcumenius,|| in this place, harpeth upon the same string; but (by the leave of those reverend fathers) upon what ground it doth not appear, since it is nowhere written in the whole body of the law, 'Thou shalt hate thy enemies'; and, therefore, it is well observed, that our blessed Saviour doth not say, 'You have heard that it hath been said by Moses, or in the law;' but 'You have heard that it hath been said,' to wit, by the scribes and pharisees, those corrupt interpreters of the law.

To all this, for the further confirmation, I may add, that Solomon expressly requireth in his Proverbs, chap. xxv. 21, 22; and St Paul from him enjoineth in his epistle, Rom. xii. 20, 'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat: and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: so shalt thou heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward thee'; that God

in the law gave strict charge concerning the beast, even of our enemy: Exod. xxiii. 4, 5, 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him.' Again, 'If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help him.' And, certainly, he that required them to assist their enemy in rescuing his beast did not allow them hatred and malice to his person. Nay, yet once more in the fore-mentioned place, where Moses saith, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour,' is prefixed, 'Thou shalt not avenge or bear grudge,' which refers to an enemy that hath done one an injury. As for that *lex talionis*, law of retaliation, though (as appeareth by our Saviour, Mat. v. 38) it was otherwise construed by the pharisees, yet doubtless it was only intended by God as a rule for the public magistrate in his administrations of justice, and is no less in this sense allowable now. And though they were to exercise acts of hostility towards the nations about them, in making no peace with the Ammonites, casting out the Canaanites, and cutting off the Amalekites, yet this was by a special command from God, which both then and now may dispense with a general precept; and withal, their being the instruments of God's vengeance upon the heathen, did not hinder, but that they might be free from any private revenge, and so fulfil the general precept, as well as any headman; who, notwithstanding he is the executor of justice, may yet love that person whom he doth execute.

(2.) That love which the law requirath may very well, in some cases, be raised up to that height of suffering death. Briefly to clear which, know, that laying down our life, in reference to our neighbour, is only required in one of these two cases: the one when the public, the other when the spiritual, good of others necessitateth it.

To lay down a man's life for the public good, is so far from being purely Christian, that even heathens have done it; and therefore is no doubt included in the Mosaical precept, Exodus xxxiii. 32; which we may the rather believe, because we find himself willing to be 'blotted out of the book of life,' for the preservation of the people; and if it be said that this is to love our neighbour more than ourselves, I answer, It is not, if we take *neighbour* distributively; and if we take it collectively, for the generality, even nature teacheth us; and surely, then, Moses his law did require to prefer the public before the private welfare, a general before a particular good.

3. But that dying which is especially an act of love, is when we are willing to lose our own temporal life for the eternal good of others. An example of this we have in the Old Testament. What else meant David's wish in regard of his son Absalom, when he said, 2 Sam. xviii. 33, 'Would God I had died for thee!' desiring no doubt to prevent that eternal death into which he had reason to think his son,

\* R. Kimchi.

† Quantum ad traditionem scribarum.—*Tostat. in Matth.* ix. 343.

‡ Aug. lib. i. de Ser. dom. in Mont cap. 41.

§ Hilar. in Mat.

|| Œcumen in loc. Spanhem pars ult. dub. 128.



dying in rebellion against his king, his father, was now plunged by the loss of his temporary life. And in truth, though this be to love our neighbour's soul better than our body, yet it is not to love our neighbour better than ourselves, and therefore exceeds not the Mosaical precept. *Ceteris paribus*, let there be an equality every way, and a Christian is as much bound now to prefer himself before his neighbour as a Jew was, and in a way of inequality a Jew was bound to damage himself for his neighbour's good as well as a Christian. I am not to love my neighbour's soul more than my own soul, nor his body more than my body, nor his estate more than my own. Christian charity in this respect, as well as Jewish, begins at home; only when it is my estate, or body, and my neighbour's soul, which come in competition, this must be valued above those; and this is required by Moses, as well as Christ. In one word, that addition, *as thyself*, was certainly intended, not as a limitation or restriction, but rather as an amplification and enlargement of this duty of love. That look, how dear, and entire, and cordial that love is, which men bear to themselves, the same they ought to have towards their neighbours. And therefore I shut up this with that of Cassian,\* *quid diutius evangelicis atque apostolicis preceptis immoramur, cum etiam vetus lex hac eadem precepit*: this precept of love is not only apostolical, but prophetic; evangelical, but legal; and in that respect, truly said to be from the beginning.

(4.) Lastly, There is one interpretation more† which looketh backward as far as Adam; and so this command of love is from the beginning, not only because commanded by Moses, but imprinted in nature. The law of love was written at first in the mind of man; and though it be much obliterated, yet some characters still remain; and as by ruinous walls we guess how stately the buildings once were, so by these remaining impressions we may easily gather what goodly characters of it were once stamped upon us. Thus as before Christ made it gospel, Moses gave it as a written law; so before Moses made it a written law, God made it a branch, or rather the root of the law of nature.

To wind it up therefore, tell me, I beseech you, how inexcusable shall we be, if, having so manifold obligations, we shall be negligent in the practice of this duty. Even the Gentiles, that have only the remainders of nature's law, are obliged to love, and not observing it will be found justly blameable; much more the Jews, who, besides nature, had the law of Moses to guide them; but most of all we Christians, who have nature, and Moses's law, and the law of Christ, to direct us. 'A threefold cord,' saith Solomon, 'is not easily broken.' Behold, a threefold obligation lieth on us Christians: Christ, Moses, Adam,

\* Cass. l. viii. c. xiv.

† Ecum., Justin., Aret. in loc.

all preaching this doctrine to us; upon which account St John calls it, the 'old commandment which was from the beginning.'

2. There is yet another branch of this first particular in the commendation remaining, which we find in the beginning of the eighth verse, 'Again, a new commandment I write unto you.' That our apostle by this new commandment intends the same which before he calls, not a new, but an old commandment, is most probable, partly because the conjunction *καὶ* properly signifieth, and is here rendered *again*, which therefore seems to look back on what precedes, and intimateth that he continueth his discourse upon the same subject, chiefly because this very command of love is called by our blessed Saviour in the Gospel 'a new commandment,' John xiii. 34. Nor is this phrase used anywhere concerning any other than this command; and therefore it is most rational so to understand it here, though Socinus most absurdly contends, that those words, 'the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth,' are a command, and that which here is called a new commandment.

This being premised, the chief work is to reconcile St John to himself; for if he speak of the same commandment, how is it that he calls it in one verse *not new*, and in the next *a new*? Is it not a contradiction to affirm and deny the same thing of the same subject? That of St Ambrose concerning the cherubims, *si stabant, quomodo movebant? si movebant, quomodo stabant?* if they did move, how did they stand? and if stand, how move? may be here alluded to. If it is old, how is it new? If new, how is it old? But surely it is not to be imagined that this holy apostle should, as it were, with one breath, give himself the lie. Had it been at a great distance, though an human author might forget himself, yet surely this divinely inspired apostle could not, and much less being so near as the next verse. And therefore we must necessarily conclude, that though he speaks of the same subject, yet not in the same respect. Now, it is a known maxim in philosophy, that contraries and contradictions may be attributed to the same subject in diverse respects; the same snow may be called white as it falleth, and black in its melting; the same person may be in one part hot, and cold in another. Not to multiply instances, the same commandment may be old, and yet in some respects not unfitly be called new.

To illustrate this, give me leave briefly to set before you those several notions, in which this term *new* may fit this old commandment of love.

1. *Appellant Hebraei novum quod praeantissimum.\** It is usual with the Hebrews to call those things new which are excellent. 'He hath put into my mouth' (saith David) 'a new psalm,' Ps. xl. 4; and again, Ps. xc. 1, 'Oh sing unto the Lord a new song;' that is, say interpreters, an excellent song. In this sense

\* Lor. in loc.

it is true here ; the command of love is an excellent command. Our Saviour, Mat. xxii. 38, 39, calls the love of God 'the first and great commandment,' and the love of our neighbour 'the second, which is like to it.' St Paul, speaking of this grace of charity, and comparing it with, prefers it before, faith and hope. That apologue is very fit to this purpose, of a consultation among the virtues, which should have the pre-eminence : whilst one was for chastity, sister to the angels ; another for justice, which giveth every man his due ; a third for prudence, Solomon's choice ; not agreeing among themselves, they made reason the umpire, who, passing by all the rest, set the crown upon the head of love. But this interpretation, though in itself true, is not so congruous to our apostle's meaning.

2. That exposition is doubtless more suitable, which expounds *new* in opposition to the long received tradition of the pharisees concerning this command ;\* for whereas this command had been corruptly taught for many years by those doctors of the law, it was now refined from the dross, and purely taught by Christ and his apostles ; and so this commandment, though old in itself, yea, older than their false glosses, yet being but newly freed from them, is fitly said to be new. It is well observed by Heinsius,† that those things are said to be new, which, though they were long before, yet are *denuò restituta*, newly restored to their pristine purity. Look as an old house repaired may be called a new house, and a rusty sword furnished a new sword ; look as an old book new bound up is as it were a new book, and a defaced picture refreshed with colours a new picture ; so is this command a new commandment. For whereas they who sat in Moses his chair had perverted this doctrine, Christ was pleased by himself and his apostles anew to revive and restore it to its primitive integrity. Indeed, it was at this time with Moses's law, as it was in the beginning of our Reformation with Christian religion. The primitive doctrine and worship had for some hundred of years been buried under the ashes of Romish superstition ; whereby it is that the reformed religion, though far older than popery, might be accounted, and was, as it were, a new religion. The moral law in Christ's time, as to the both intensive and extensive meaning of it, had been long hid under the corrupt opinion of the Jewish doctors, and in that respect the command of love, as delivered by Christ, seemed no doubt to the Jews, and was as it were, a new commandment.

But there are two other interpretations which seem more genuine than the former. And therefore know,

3. That this commandment of love is a new commandment, not substantially, but circumstantially ; not in the essence of the doctrine, but the manner of performance ; not in respect of the thing delivered, but

the way of delivering it. It is the same command of love which is now, and was in the law enjoined ; but the example is different : in the law, our love to ourselves ; in the gospel, Christ's love to us is made the pattern of this duty.\* Indeed, this variety of example maketh no difference at all in the matter of the precept. When Moses saith, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' he requireth as much as when Christ saith, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' That of St Paul concerning the love which ought to be between man and wife, fully illustrateth this truth ; for whereas he useth both these examples, exhorting husbands to 'love their wives, as Christ loved his church,' and 'every one to love his wife as himself,' Eph. v. 25, 33, yet he commands no more by the one than the other, only presseth it hereby with the greater energy. Nor are we to conceive any new addition to the general precept of love, but only a fuller enforcement of the same precept from this new example. Look as the Jewish and the Christian Sabbaths are both days to be kept holy, but on a different account, the one of the creation of the world, and the other of Christ's resurrection, so the Jewish and the Christian command of love are of the same nature, but the one urged by the example of self-love, and the other of Christ's ; and because the gospel command is enforced with a new argument, and so delivered in a new manner, it may therefore be styled a new commandment. Nor is it unlikely that St John, having before in general exhorted to 'walk, as Christ walked,' here particularising in this walk of love, might call it a new commandment in this respect, as it is an imitation of Christ's pattern.

4. But there is yet another interpretation, which wants not good authority and reason to back it, and would not be passed by ; and that is, to take *new* not in opposition to *antiquity*, but *antiquation* ; new, because it waxeth not old, is never out of date, but always in force. There are some commands which are new, and not old : such are the sacraments of the New Testament ; others which are old, but not new, because abolished : such are the ceremonial services of the Old Testament ; and there are others which are old, and yet new : such are the precepts of the moral law.† St Paul compareth love to a debt, when he saith, Rom. xiii. 15, 'Owe nothing to any man but love ;' and indeed it is such a debt that is ever paying, the bond being never cancelled. It is the usual cry of this age, when preachers deliver those moral doctrines, he preacheth old, and common things ; but (my brethren) they are so old, that they are new, and must continually be inculcated upon the people. And therefore let us all learn so to look upon this command, that taking it as new, we may the more carefully observe it. It is well noted by Arnoldus,‡ *Solent*

\* Illyr. in loc., Spanb. l. d.

† Orig. in Num., Dyd., Calv., Fer. in loc.

‡ Arnold. adv. Ræchov. Cat.

\* Novum quia aliter à Christo explicatum.—Arel.

† Heins. in loc.



*homines leges novas studiosius observare; paulatim vero lege inveterascente de studio remittunt*, men are wont to be very observant of a law whilst it is fresh and new, but as it groweth old their obedience becometh remiss; and therefore it is Maldonate's\* note upon the Gospel, that this newness is to be referred, *non tam ad mandatum ipsum, quam ad studium obediendi*, not so much to the command itself as to our endeavour of obeying it; and since as some trees are green all the year, so this is always in force, we should with all care and conscience perform it.

To draw to an end; there is one exception of *novum* for *rarum*, new for that which is rare and unusual, which I would to God might not be too true as to the practice of this commandment; it is rare and unusual, especially in this frozen age. But, however, let us remember the command is new that is excellent, and new that is renewed, and new that is refined, and new that is persuaded by a new and urgent example. And therefore let our desires and endeavours be still new and vigorous in the observance of it, so much the rather, considering that, as some of the ancients† gloss, it is *novum quasi innovans*, this new command-

\* Maldonat. in Johan.

† Aug. in loc., Bern. de cænâ dom. serm. 5.

ment, by our obedience to it, will transform us into new creatures and new men in Christ Jesus. And that we may be enabled to this obedience, what other course should we take than to pray for a new spirit? for that is another reason given of this phrase,\* *novum quia novo spiritu impletur*, it is therefore called new, because it requireth the new grace of the New Testament, which is given by a new spirit to fulfil it. For this new grace let us be daily orators, so shall we be of this new commandment daily practisers.

To end all; they say of wine, it is best when old; of honey, it is best when new; behold, this command of love is as wine, and to commend it, it is an old commandment; as honey, and to commend it, it is a new commandment. Some men are plodding antiquaries, and delight in old things, old evidences, old monuments, old gold, old coins, old proverbs, and the like; others curious novelists, and delight in new: here is that may allure both, and therefore, which way soever we are bent, our apostle hath as it were fitted our humour. God grant it may affect our hearts, so as we may all be in love with this commandment of love, which is both an old and new commandment.

\* Aret. Est. in loc.

## SERMON XXIX.

*Which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*—1 JOHN II. part of the 8th verse.

AMONG the many observables in sacred writ, it would not be passed by what frequent use the penmen make of those two arts, logic and rhetoric; by the one proving strongly, and by the other persuading sweetly. It were easy to discover in these divine books the several topics of argumentation, tropes and figures of elocution, and forms of oratory. True it is, it had been enough for the divine Majesty, whose penmen these were, only to assert and enjoin, without either proving or persuading. But such is his mercy, that, knowing our dulness and perverseness, he is pleased to convince us by undeniable reasons, and allure us by loving insinuations. A pregnant instance hereof we have in these words, the scope whereof is to make way for the command of love which our apostle was about to give them, friendly bespeaking them with the title of *brethren*, and sweetly preparing them to receive the command by various arguments, which are aptly couched in this oratorical preem: 'I write not a new but an old commandment;' and 'Again, a new commandment I write to you, which is true in him,' &c.

Having despatched the compellation and the first branch of the commendation, we are now to proceed to the second, which is drawn from that conformity this duty hath to Christ's pattern, intimated in those

words, 'which thing is true, or a thing which is true in him.' I am not ignorant that some learned men\* refer all that followeth in this verse to those words in the beginning of it, 'A new commandment I write to you,' as if it were only a confirmation of that part of the commendation, and so those words, 'which thing is true,' are thus to be paraphrased: which thing, namely, that this commandment of love is a new commandment, is true, both *respectu Christi et nostri*, in regard of Christ, who hath himself fulfilled it, and so given us a new pattern of it; and in respect of us Christians, who, by reason of the true light shining, have a new grace enabling us to perform it ourselves. But I rather incline to take these words as affording new topics for the commendation of love, and so the laudatory character we are now to handle is, that this grace which is enjoined to Christians is no other than what was true in Christ.

The clause as it is set down in the Greek carrieth with it no small difficulty. Gagneius † upon this place ingenuously professeth that he could not find out the true sense and meaning of it. Some expositors render *ἐν αὐτῷ* 'in itself,' as if the sense of these words were only to assert the verity of the thing concerning which he discourseth; but this to me seemeth jejune and

\* Zanch. Lorin. in loc.

† Gag. in loc.

unbecoming the fulness of Scripture expressions. Besides, if we observe the phrase of this holy apostle, and that in this epistle, we shall find it very usual with him to speak of Christ under those phrases of *ἐκεῖνος* and *αὐτός*, as we may observe in the latter end of this and the beginning of the next chapter. Look, as Mary Magdalene, having her thoughts so full of Christ, conceived there was no need of naming him, John xx. 8, only to say, 'Tell me where thou hast laid him,' so St John, burning with love to Christ,\* not doubting but that he was well known to them to whom he wrote, and therefore, supposing they would easily guess of whom he wrote, thinketh it enough to say only *him*; so that we may very well expound this *ἐν αὐτῷ*, as our translators read it, 'in him,' to wit, Christ.

But the greatest difficulty of construing this clause lieth in the first particle *ὃ*, since being of the neuter gender it cannot agree with the feminine *ἐν τολῇ*, which is the substantive immediately preceding; but it is no strange or unusual thing for an adjective of the neuter gender to be taken substantively,† and so *quod*, which is as much as *quæ res*, which thing. Thus it is rendered in our translation, and is not unfitly expounded by Grotius to be that thing,‡ namely, love, which is the matter of the old and new commandment; and indeed, though the phrase may seem somewhat harsh, yet the sense is most fitly thus expressed, since the commandment itself refers to us, not Christ; but the thing or matter of the commandment was true in Christ himself, and so layeth a greater obligation upon us to perform the commandment. Nor need we stick at this construction, when we find the same in the former chapter, where, in the second and third verses, after the feminine substantive, *ζωή*, is put a neuter adjective *ὃ*, as that fore-mentioned author observes. And now, according to this interpretation, the plain sense of the words appeareth to be this: A thing which is true in him; that is, This grace of love which I enjoin you is no other than what was verified in Christ himself. So that, as before, he lets them see it is a commandment both old and new, so here he acquaints them further, it was such a commandment as had Christ himself an example of it. *Ipsæ enim prius charitatem ostendit*, saith Ferus; for he himself did practise love. *Ratum ac re ipsa invenitur primum quidem in illo ut capite*, saith Beza; in him, as being the head of the church, and having received the Spirit without measure, was this primarily accomplished. And this interpretation I so much the rather assent to, because it so aptly suiteth with what our apostle had before delivered when he calleth upon them to express the reality of their interest in Christ by keeping his commandments, and walking as he walked; whilst he lets them see that the duty of love which he was

about presently, and did intend chiefly to inculcate upon them, was the only way to perform both these. By love they should keep the commandments, for it is both the old and the new commandment; and by love they should walk as Christ walked, for it is a thing which was true in him.

And now, that this was true in Christ, is a truth so clear that there will be no need to prove it. Indeed, it is *tanquam radio solis scripta*, written as it were with a sunbeam, so that he which runs may read it. It is a subject I might very well dilate upon, but that I shall have more full occasion to discuss both the love of Christ and God to us in the following chapters. That it is so cannot be denied; yea, should we be so ungrateful as to doubt it, the manger and the cross would testify against us. If either conferring benefits on us, or suffering injuries for us, can assure his love to us, our apostle sheweth it to be true in both when he saith, Rev. i. 6, 'To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us kings and priests to God the Father.' How legible are the characters of his love in his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession; and all those advantages of redemption, remission, adoption, justification, salvation, which by those accrue to us; which whoso knowingly considers, must needs say with St Paul, Titus iii. 4, 'The love and kindness of God our Saviour hath appeared;' with St Peter, 1 Peter ii. 3, 'The Lord is gracious;' and with St Bernard,\* his love to us was *dignitatis nescius, dignatione dives, affectu potens, suasu efficax*, full of condescension and affection. Indeed, that it should be so, though it cannot be gainsaid, may well be admired, especially when we look upon ourselves. What were we, the rebellious offspring of degenerate parents, slaves of Satan, servants of sin, children of wrath, that Christ should cast an eye towards, and place his love upon, us? The *ὅτι* then is manifest, that he loved us; and if he ask you the *διότι*, why he loved us? there can no reason on our part be given of it. And surely, since his love was not deserved, no, nor so much as desired by us, fit it is it should be acknowledged with admiration, and retaliated with gratulation, and followed by imitation. This last our apostle here aimeth at, in which respect he fitly addeth, 'and in you;' it being most rational, that what was true in the head should be true also in the members, what was true in the root should be true in the branches; that as Christ loved us, so we Christians should love one another.

Before I proceed to this, which is the next part, I shall, in a few words, mind you of one reading of these words, in which they have reference to this second part. Grotius tells us that in one manuscript it is *ἐμῶν*; and St Jerome, in his translation,† reads it *nobis*, 'a thing which is true in him,' that is, Christ; 'and in us,' that is, his apostles, who write and publish this commandment to you. The original copy was drawn by

\* Loquitur flagrans Joannes amore Christi.—*Lor. ibid.*

† Substantivè acceptam.—*Mench.*

‡ Non tam præcepto quam res ipsa hic describitur.—*Grot.*

\* Bern. in Ps. *Qui habet.* † Hier. adv. Jovin. lib. ii.



Christ; his disciples transcribed it in their own practice, and have commended it to all Christians to write after both him and them. This cup of love was begun by Christ, his apostles pledged him; and it must go round, all Christians are to drink of it.

And here I cannot but take notice of that which I would to God were seriously laid to heart by all who succeed the apostles in the work of the ministry, namely, that as St John, in the behalf of himself and the other apostles, saith, I write to you a commandment concerning a thing which is true in us, so we may be able to say, that that which we enjoy the people is verified in ourselves. This is (according to Isidore's\* phrase) *παιδεύων ζῶσαν τῇ νεκρῶ ἐπιστολαγαγῶν*, to join living with dead instruction, when our life as well as our tongue preacheth. This is (according to Primasius† his exposition) 'rightly to divide the word of truth,' 2 Tim. ii. 15, when we confirm our doctrine by our practice. Finally, this is (according to Playfer's allusion) to lift up the voice like a trumpet, which must be held with the hand as well as blown with the mouth, when we not only report the truth by a lively preaching, but support it by a preaching life. Indeed, then only can ministers publish commands with authority, so as to gain belief; with boldness, so as not to be ashamed; with efficacy, so as to persuade; when they join patterns to their precepts.

1. Men are very apt to question the truth of that doctrine to which the preacher's practice giveth the lie.‡ The way to imprint an instruction upon the hearer's heart as well as ear, is to speak by our works as well as words. It is said of our blessed Saviour, Mat. vii. 29, 'He spake as one having authority;' and St Gregory's§ moral is, *Cum imperio docetur, quod prius agitur, quam docetur*, he only preacheth with authority who doth what he teacheth.

2. When a minister's conversation confuteth his instruction, blushing may well sit upon his cheeks, and his ears tingle to hear that of St Paul, Rom. ii. 21, 'Thou that teachest another shall not steal, dost thou steal?' The leper in the law was to cover his lips, Lev. xiv. 45, which one morally applieth to leprous ministers, who may well stop their mouths for shame.

3. A speech not accompanied with action, saith Isidore|| truly, for the most part is lifeless and ineffectual. If the heavens, that is, the preachers, are as brass, only tinkling with sound of words, no marvel if the earth, to wit, the people, are as iron, obdurate to all their counsels; since *cujus vita despicitur, restat ut ejus precatio contemnatur*,¶ his preaching is usually despicable whose life is contemptible. In which regard St Bernard\*\* saith truly of such an one, *Videndum ne non tam nutriti doctrinæ verbi, quam sterili vitæ noccat*,

it is to be feared his vicious life more infects than his pious doctrine instructs. That preacher will both find most comfort in himself, and do most good to others, who can say in the words of a devout abbot, *Non aliquem docui quicquam quod ego prius ipse non fecerim*, I never taught any man any lesson which I did not first learn myself; as here St John saith of this commandment, 'it is true in us.' And so much for this second commendatory character of this grace of love, its conformity to the pattern of Christ, and (as you see by some readings) his apostles. I now hasten to the,

3. Last, that conformity which this duty hath to the state of the gospel, and the truth of Christianity, in these words, 'And in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.' In these words, *ἐν ὑμῖν*, 'in you,' is implied a substantive verb, which may be put either indicatively or imperatively; *is*, or *let it be*, true in you, according to a different construction of the following words. Whilst some by darkness and light understand the legal and evangelical administration, so the imperative rendering best suiteth: 'Let this love be true in you, because the darkness of the law is past, and the light of the gospel shineth.' And others by darkness understand the state of unregeneracy, and by light the state of regeneracy. And so the indicative best fits this thing which is commanded; the duty of love is 'true in you, because you are brought out of the darkness of nature into the light of grace.' Each of these constructions are consonant to the analogy of faith, agree well with the scope of the apostle, want not the concurrence of judicious expositors, and therefore I shall neglect neither.

1. In handling these words according to the first interpretation, we shall look upon them two ways, as an assertion and as an argument.

1. As an assertion, we have considerable in them,

A double subject: *darkness and light*.

A double predicate: of the darkness, that it is *past*; of the true light, that it *now shineth*.

1. It would in the first place be here considered, that the gospel is set forth by *light*, and the law by *darkness*. Suitable to this it is that St Paul, Rom. xiii. 11 (as some expound those words, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand'), compareth the one to the day and the other to the night. And St Ambrose\* interprets these words of the psalmist, Ps. xix. 2, 'Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge,' the one of the Christian, and the other of the Jew.

1. That the gospel is most fitly described by light, is out of question, and the analogy may easily be demonstrated in several parables.

The fountain of light is the sun, and Christ, the Sun of righteousness, is the author of the gospel, in which respect it is called the 'word of Christ,' Col. iii. 16.

\* Dies Dici, i. e. Christianus Christiano; nox nocti, i. e. Judæus Judæo.—*Ambrose Hortat. ad Virgin.*

\* Isid. pelus. lib. i. ep. cccævi.

† Vide Primas. ibid.

‡ Cass. collat. xi. cap. iv.

§ Greg. mor. xxiii. 7.

|| Isid. pel. lib. iii. ep. cccii.

¶ Steph. Cant.

\*\* Bern. in Cant. serm. lxxvi.

The nature of light is pure, the doctrine of the gospel is holy; which regard it is called the 'mystery of godliness,' 1 Tim. iii. 16, and the doctrine which is according to godliness. Light, by reason of its splendour and beauty, is very amiable, delighting, cheering, and reviving the beholder. Evangelical truths are pleasant and comfortable to the believer. So much the word *εὐαγγέλιον*, signifying a good message, or (according to the angel's phrase, Luke ii. 10) 'tidings of great joy,' imports. Such is the subtilty of the light, that it penetrateth the air, the wudow, the smallest crevice; and so great is the gospel's efficacy, that it pierceth to the very soul. So much the author to the Hebrews asserts when he saith, Heb. iv. 11, 'The word of God is quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' Finally, the principal effect and use of light is to discover and make manifest. Things that are secret and hidden appear in the light, by reason of its clarity and brightness. For this cause chiefly is the gospel resembled to light, because it is ἀποκαλύψις and ἐπιφανεία, a revelation and a manifestation of many glorious mysteries. The trinity of persons in the unity of essence, the unity of the two natures in one person in the incarnation of the Son of God, the meeting together of mercy and justice in the redemption of the world, the estate of bliss and glory laid up for believers in heaven, the calling of the Gentiles from all parts of the earth out of the state of ignorance to the knowledge of God and Christ, are those mysterious doctrines which the gospel plainly revealeth to us. Well may it deserve to be represented by the similitude of light.

2. But though the metaphor of light very well agree to the evangelical, yet that the other resemblance, of darkness, should be understood of the legal administration, seemeth somewhat harsh and strange; nor indeed can it be admitted, but in a qualified sense.

To which end you must know that the law of Moses may be considered either absolutely or comparatively. If we consider it absolutely in itself, it was light. David acknowledgeth it, his son Solomon in his Proverbs asserteth it, and it were easy to parallel the law to light as well as the gospel, inasmuch as it is the law of the Lord, an undefiled law, rejoicing the heart; yea, inasmuch as whatever was necessary for the Jew to know in order to salvation was delivered in it. Again, if we consider it comparatively with the state of the Gentiles at that time, what is here ascribed to the gospel belongs even to the law; it was then the true light. 'In Jewry was God known,' saith the psalmist, 'and his name was great in Israel.' Whilst the whole world was an Egypt involved in the darkness of idolatry, Jewry was a Goshen, a place of light for the knowledge and worship of the true God.

But still, compare the time of the law with the time of the gospel, and so this term of darkness may be

asserted of it. A light it was, but a candle light. So much the phrase of a light, Ps. exix. 105, and a lamp, Prov. vi. 23, used both by the father and the son, David and Solomon, intimate; and perhaps the like is intended by St Peter's expression, 2 Peter i. 19, of 'a light shining in a dark place.' Now, what is a candle light but dark in comparison of day light?

To clear this, be pleased to observe that this darkness is not opposed simply to light, but to the true light, and that as shining: John i. 9, τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν. Now, this expression of *true* may be taken in a threefold reference, as contradistinguished to that which is imperfect, figurative, and false.

1. As *perfect* is sometimes no more than *true*, so *true* is sometimes as much as *perfect*. It is the gloss of Grotius upon the text,\* *Quod in quaque re eminent, solet dici ἀληθινόν*, that which is the most eminent in any kind is said to be *truly* so. Thus the true light is as much as the choice and most resplendent light; in which sense Christ himself is said in the Gospel to be, and here the evangelical administration is called, 'the true light.' That this is the meaning of the epithet here appeareth so much the more in that the article is prefixed both before the substantive and the adjective, as if we should render it *the light, the true*, being so most eminently and transcendently. Indeed, the law is a light, and in some sense a true light, because it did not deceive nor misguide them who walked according to it; but still the gospel is *the true*, because the most illustrious light, and so in comparison of it the law is, as it were, darkness.

2. It is not an unusual signification of *true* and *truth* in holy writ, nor unsuitable to this place, to take it in opposition to types, figures, and ceremonies. In this sense we are to understand it, where Christ is called the 'true tabernacle,' that of Moses being only a type of him. And when our Saviour saith, John iv. 24, 'God will be worshipped in truth,' not according to the typical and ceremonial worship of the law; and yet more appositely to our present purpose, when it is said, John i. 17, 'The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ;' the meaning whereof is briefly thus, whereas the law only enjoineth, the gospel enableth, and what the law taught in figures is nakedly delivered in the gospel. Congruous to which is that of St Austin, † *Grace comes by Christ; Ut, datā indulgentiā peccatorum, quod præceptum erat ex Dei dono custodiretur*, that indulgence being granted to our failings, what is commanded may by God's assistance be performed; and truth, *Ut ablata observatione umbrarum, quod promissum erat ex fide præsentaretur*, that by removing the obscure types, what is promised might be made manifest. Upon this account the phrase of *σκότια*, darkness, here used, may be attributed to the law, or at least that which is, by the learned Dr Hammond, ‡ observed to be the reading in the royal manu-

\* Grot. in loc.

† Ham in loc.

‡ Aug. contr. Faust. lib. xxii. c. 6.



script *σκία*, a shadow, all the ceremonies, types, and sacrifices of the law being but shadows of those things which the true light of the gospel more fully discovereth. This is excellently expressed by St Paul to the Colossians, chap. ii. 17,\* where he calleth the legal ceremonies a shadow, and Christ the body; to the Hebrews when he saith, chap. x. 1, 'The law was a shadow of good things to come, not the very image.' In both which scriptures put together you find a body, an image, a shadow; the body is Christ, the image the gospel, the shadow the law. Now as the representation which a shadow maketh of the body is very dark and obscure in comparison of that which the image sheweth; since the shadow represents only *in communi*, that there is a body; the image *in particulari*, the several lineaments of the body; so the discoveries which the law maketh of Christ, and salvation by him, are very imperfect in comparison of the gospel revelations.

3. If you like to retain the common signification of true as opposite to false, you must take in the verb *shineth*, and so the sense will be clear; the true light shineth only in the gospel, and therefore the law is called darkness. True, there was a light, a true light, in the law, but it did not shine forth; it was as it were hid under a bushel, and so a state of darkness in comparison of the shining light in the gospel. It is very observable to this purpose, that all things were wrapped up to the Jews. When they carried the brazen altar in the wilderness, they covered it with a purple cloth, Num. iv. 13; when they carried the ark, it was covered with three coverings, a veil, a badger's skin, and a cloth of blue; the table of the shewbread had three coverings; and, except the laver, everything was covered in the temple; yea, the temple itself had a veil. When Moses came from the mount, his face was veiled, the priests bare the things which they might not see; and all this to signify what a concealment there was of divine knowledge under the law. To this purpose St Gregory † allegorisseth these words of the psalmist, *Tenebrosa aqua in nubibus*, 'Dark water in the clouds;' that is, *occulta scientia in prophetis*, the darkness of knowledge in the law and prophets.

It is true, eternal life, salvation by Christ, and those other sublime truths, are to be found in the law; but as a face under a mask, as a sun in a cloud, heavenly wrapped up in earthly promises, Christ involved in types and figures. There were but few that knew anything of these truths in comparison of the multitudes now, and that they did know was but obscurely in comparison of the clearness now. Divine knowledge was then as an ointment kept close in an alabaster box, now the savour thereof perfumeth the whole house; then it was at best but as the dawning of the day, now it is full noon; and these doctrines which were *relata in veteri*, folded up in the old, are *revelata in*

\* Vide Daven.

† Greg. mor. lib. xvii c. 11.

*novo*, unfolded in the New Testament. To this extends that expression used by St Paul concerning Christians, 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We all with open face behold the glory of the Lord.' The Jews' faces were veiled, ours are open; they, according to the apostle's phrase elsewhere, saw afar off, and so darkly; we, as it were, near hand, and so clearly.

To sum it up, look as the true shining light of the gospel in comparison of that beautiful vision, so the typical instruction of the law in comparison of evangelical teaching, is but darkness, or at best a shadow. Indeed, the triumphant church is *in intimis*, the holy of holies; the Christian church militant *in atriis*, the holy place; but the Jewish *in extimis*, the outward court. When God gave the law the second time, he commanded the people to stand at the foot of the mount, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel, to worship afar off in the middle of the mount, and Moses ascends to the top of the mount, even within the clouds; by which three one hath represented the three states of the church: by those who stood at bottom, the Jewish; by them who worshipped in the middle, the Christians; and by Moses, the glorified church. In one word, to use St Ambrose his phrase, *Umbra in lege, imago in evangelio, veritas in celo*, the truth is in heaven, the image in the gospel, but in the law only the shadow.

2. The just fitness of those metaphors, darkness and light, in reference to the law and gospel being manifested, that which next is more briefly to be considered is that which is predicated concerning both, namely, that the one is *past*, and the other now *shineth*. Indeed, the word for *passing* is in the present tense, *παζαγετα*, it doth pass away, for when St John wrote this epistle it was only *in fieri*, passing, not past. These legal ceremonies began to die at Christ's passion; then, in signification thereof, was the veil of the temple not only *perforatum*, or *attritum*, or *laceratum*, worn or torn a little, but rent in twain from the top to the bottom. But they were not dead and buried till the destruction of the temple itself; so that, during the space between Christ's passion and Jerusalem's desolation, they were passing away, and the evangelical administration did more and more display itself. Thus, as when the house is built the scaffold is pulled down, when the sun ariseth the stars disappear, when the prophet himself came the staff was taken off,\* and when Christ increased John the Baptist decreased, so when the gospel was published the legal administration vanished away.

And surely the consideration hereof should teach us on the one hand to bewail the hardened Jews, who, though 'the darkness be past, and the true light now shineth,' shut their eyes against the light, and love to abide in darkness. St Jerome very aptly compareth the Jews before Christ to those that eat the flesh, Christians under the gospel to those who eat

\* 2 Kings iv. 33.—Eo.

the marrow, but the Jews now to the dogs that gnaw the bone. Indeed, those legal observances at the best were only *σκία*, a shadow, but now they are *σκότια*, a darkness, extitit to those who still embrace them. Oh let us pity and pray for the blinded Jews, that the veil may be taken from their faces, and they may behold the light which shineth so brightly; nor is there less cause of gratulation in respect of ourselves than lamentation in regard of the Jews. It was a great benefit to learning when the obscure hieroglyphics of the Egyptians were changed into letters, and Plato's dark writings were brought down to more easy conceptions by Aristotle; but surely far greater is the benefit which the church hath now, the evangelical administration succeeding in the room of the legal. Oh how fitly may that expression of the psalmist be taken up by us Christians, Ps. cxviii. 27, 'God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light,' a clear, full, glorious light; let us be glad and rejoice in it!

To wind up this first interpretation, by considering the words (in this sense) as an argument why this command of love ought to be true in us, namely, because we live under the Christian dispensation. Indeed, hatred and malice were not tolerable in the Jews, but they are abominable in us Christians. Who should live in love if not we, to whom the love of God and Christ is so clearly revealed! O my brethren, how sad is it to think, though the shadow (as some read it), the darkness (as others) be past, and the true light now shineth, yet we may too truly complain that the shadow remaineth! Nothing but shadows of grace, fancies of godliness, found among us; nay, the darkness of envy and hatred, and all uncharitable walking prevaileth among us. Oh be we exhorted, since we have the light, to walk in it, to walk worthy of it, to walk as children of it, by walking in this path of love. And so much for that exposition. The other interpretation renders these words assertively, 'is true in you,' and expounds the darkness and light of sin and grace; an exposition which I incline to as most rational, it being very probable that our apostle, as in the following verses he useth the same metaphor, so here intends the same things; and that there his primary scope is so to describe, by darkness and light, man's corrupt and regenerate estate, will appear in the handling. For the better prosecution of these words in this sense, be pleased to proceed with me by these steps, and observe,

1. What is the state of all men before conversion, namely, a state of darkness. Darkness is in our minds, the darkness of ignorance and infidelity. We neither do nor can know aright either God or ourselves: 'The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,' is St Paul's general doctrine, 1 Cor. ii. 14, asserting our ignorance of God; and the particular charge against Laodicea, Rev. iii. 18, that she 'knew not she was wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked,' may justly be extended to all man-

kind in regard of self-ignorance. Indeed, there is so much light left in us as may render us inexcusable, but not as can lead us to heaven; we neither of ourselves can find out nor yet discern divine truths, though they are set before us. How quick-sighted soever reason may be in naturals, it is dim, yea, blind in spirituals. And as our blessed Saviour argueth, 'If the eye be darkness, the whole body must needs be dark;' the eyes of our understanding being darkened, no marvel if our will and affections be clouded, yea, a darkness of sin overrun our whole man; so that what St Paul saith to the Ephesians is true of all unregenerate persons, they are not only in the concrete *dark*, but abstract *darkness* itself.

2. What the state of all regenerate persons is. The darkness is past, and the true light of saving knowledge and heavenly grace shineth in their hearts. Regenerate Christians are called in the New Testament 'new creatures;' and indeed not unfitly, since, as it was in the old, so is it in this new creation. We read in the beginning of Genesis, chap. i. 2, 3, that 'darkness was upon the face of the deep, and God said, Let there be light,' a fit emblem of the Spirit's work in a sinner's conversion. Whereas darkness covereth the soul before, a glorious light ariseth in, and diffuseth itself through it. To this, no doubt, the apostle alludeth when he saith, 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts;' and for this reason it is that very often the turning of a sinner is set forth by this metaphor. So Paul's conversion of the Gentiles is called a 'turning them from darkness to light,' Acts xxvi. 18; the converted Colossians are said to be 'delivered from the power of darkness,' Col. i. 13; and of the Ephesians it is said, 'You who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord,' Eph. v. 8; suitable to all which is this phrase in my text, 'The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.'

Nor is it unworthy the observation, how fitly these two clauses are joined together, since the one cannot be without the other; nay, indeed, one is the cause of the other. In every convert there is not only a passing away of darkness, but a shining of the true light; yea, the shining of the light is the cause of the passing away of the darkness; in which respect Zanchy noteth\* that *conjunctio copulans pro causali posita videtur*, the copulative conjunction *and* is put for the causal *for*. This will the more appear if we consider what St Austin hath observed,† namely, that darkness is nothing else but the non-residency of light, and therefore that which expelleth darkness must needs be the presence of light. Thus the grace of the Spirit infused into the soul is that which prevaileth to the expulsion of sin. Look as the taking of an antidote driveth out the poison, the putting of a

\* Zanch. in loc.

† Qui diligenter considerat quid sint tenebræ, nil aliud inveniet, quam absentiam lucis.—*Aug. de gen. ad lit.*



new seal upon the wax defaith the old stamp, and the return of the sun causeth the darkness to vanish; so is it the donation of the Spirit and his grace which dispossesseth sin and Satan of the soul.

Hence, we may take notice what it is that maketh the difference between a convert and a natural man, namely, the shining of the light of grace. We that are converted were once involved in the same state of darkness with the rest of the world, and as unable to deliver ourselves from it, had not God's free grace caused the light to shine upon us, which he denieth to others; in which regard St Peter saith, 1 Peter ii. 9, to the converted Christians to whom he wrote, 'You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should shew forth the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.'

But yet it must withal be considered that the words in this sense are better read according to the Greek, 'the darkness passeth away,' than that it 'is past,' since so long as we are here, though our light be true, yet it is not perfect, but 'shineth more and more to the perfect day.' Now, according to the increase of the light is the decrease of the darkness; and, therefore, because it is not full noon, perfect day, whilst we are here, the darkness cannot be said to be wholly *past*, but, rather, is still *passing*. If, then, we are sensible of the remainder of darkness in our hearts, let it trouble, but not too much dismay us. Light and darkness in remiss degrees may be together; nor must we expect the darkness of sin to be wholly removed till we participate in the light of glory.

3. In whomsoever the darkness passeth, and the true light shineth, this is true of which our apostle here speaketh; this grace and duty of love will shew itself in all regenerate persons. It is a clear maxim, where there is the cause, there will be the effect; such as is the root, such will be the fruit. Now, goodness, which is a companion of love, is called by the apostle Paul, Eph. v. 9, 'a fruit of the Spirit,' or, as some Greek copies read it, *καρπὸς τοῦ φωτός*, 'a fruit of light;' this light which here is said to shine, which is no other than the grace of the Spirit. No wonder if, where this light shineth, there this beam and fruit of it appear; indeed, glow-worm light and star-light is such as hath no heat at all to accompany it; but sun-light, which is the true light expelling darkness, wanteth not heat, which is the emblem of this grace of love, whereby the soul is warmed, yea inflamed.

Examine we then ourselves by this character; if we be brought from darkness to light, this is true in us. Whoso experienceth this change will find some measure of strength to perform this command. Darkness is hateful, but light is lovely; the darkness of sin causeth hatred, but the light of grace, love. If the wild beast of envy and malice range abroad in thy conversation, it is a plain argument that as yet it is night with thee.

For a close of this particular, I have already told you that, according to this sense, these words, *true in you*, are to be read affirmatively; and so they are a commendation of those to whom our apostle wrote, and intimate that this command, which he was to impose on them, was already true in them. And his design hereby, no doubt, was to encourage them the more in the practice of this duty, since, according to that of the orator,\* *trahimur omnes laudis studio*, all men love to be commended, and praise is a spur to virtue. This is that policy which our blessed Saviour himself is pleased to use in all his epistles to the Asian churches, except that of Laodicea, Rev. ii. iii., owning and praising those graces which he saw in them. The like we may find practised by all the apostles in their epistles: St Paul, writing to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi. 2, 'Now I praise you, brethren;' to the Galatians, chap. v. 2, 'You did run well;' St Peter, 2 Peter i. 19, 'Whereunto you do well that you take heed.' It were easy to instance in each: and surely this practice is deservedly imitable by ministers towards their people, superiors towards inferiors; yea, all men one towards another. 'Render to all their dues, honour to whom honour belongeth,' saith St Paul, Rom. xiii. 7. It is a breach of that justice which is due from man to man, not to give due commendations. Indeed, flattery is abominable, and therefore there must be salt, as well as honey, in our praises. Commendations are then commendable when they are done with fidelity, and exceed not verity; having just ground, and aiming at a right end. We may, we ought, to acknowledge and declare the good which we see in others, as here St John doth,

But perhaps you will say, if this were true in them already, what need our apostle write this commandment to them? Is it not in vain to bid a man do that which he already doth? I answer, No; and that upon a double account,

1. That which *was true* must be *still true*, and so a command may be given to enjoin the continuance in, as well as the entrance upon, any duty. As the devil diverteth some from, so he interrupteth others in, the performance of what is good. We had need to be called upon once and again, lest we faint in the race.

2. That which *was true* ought to be *more true* in them. We fulfil no command so exactly, but we may complain of manifold defects; nor do we ever so well, but still we may do in all better. The truth of love and every grace is in whom the true light shineth, and on whom regeneration is conferred; but the strength of grace may still be deficient; and, therefore, there is continual need of writing and preaching this commandment, even to those who practise it.

To end all, what remaineth but that this large and excellent preface, with which our apostle ushereth in his discourse of love, have an effectual influence upon our hearts and lives, to prepare us for the doctrine,

\* Cic.

and excite us to the practice of it? It is a command, and that not antiquated, but still in force; it was practised by Christ himself and all his holy apostles; it is most suitable to the gospel administration under which we live; yea, if we have the true light of grace in us, this cannot but be in some measure exercised by us.

And, therefore, that we may obey this old and new commandment which God hath given us; that we

may follow that choice and excellent pattern which Christ and his apostles have left us; that we may walk worthy of the gospel which shineth among us;—

Finally, that we may declare ourselves to be indeed what we profess, brought from darkness to light: let us attend to, and set upon the performance of the following instruction, which should now be handled, but that the time prevents, and therefore must be referred to another opportunity.

### SERMON XXX.

*He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.—I JOHN II. 9-11.*

**W**HAT *humidum* and *calidum*, the natural heat and radical moisture, are to the body, that are repentance and love to the soul; nor are those more necessary to the conservation of our temporal, than these to the sustentation of our spiritual life. Indeed, the principal grace is faith; this brings, as it were, the *copula*, that which knits Christ and the Christian together in union, with whom consists our life; but the maintaining of this life is by the moisture of godly contrition for our sins, and the warmth of holy affection towards God and man. No wonder if we find, as faith and repentance, so likewise love, frequently inculcated in holy writ upon all Christians. Indeed, this latter is one of the principal subjects of this epistle; so that, though our apostle minds us of repentance in confessing our sins, and faith in believing on the name of Jesus Christ, yet he chiefly insists on loving, and that as God, so our brother, which is the design of the verses I have now read, 'He that saith he is in the light,' &c.

Having despatched the preamble inciting, contained in the two former verses, I am now to proceed to the doctrine instructing, laid down in these three; for whereas before he had mentioned a commandment concerning which he did now write to them, and withal adorned it with very amiable characters, he now plainly and expressly declareth what this commandment is, namely, that of loving our brother, for so interpreters\* well observe these verses to be an exposition of the general commendation in those; and having by his large praises endeavoured to inflame them with desires after the knowledge and practice of it, he goeth on to inform them what it is, and wherein it consists.

Nor would it be passed by that our apostle, in handling this doctrine of love, pursueth that metaphor which he made use of in the former chapter, where he layeth down the general scope of his epistle; hereby, no doubt, intending to intimate to us that this duty

\* Exegesis, et ipsius præcepti quod superius commendavit, expositio.—*Dan.*

of brotherly love is a primary step of that walking in the light which entitleth to fellowship with God; and so, on the contrary, hatred of our brother a chief step of that walking in darkness which depriveth us of that communion, so that we are now come to the fourth step of that divine walk which St John designeth to chalk out in this epistle: the first whereof is repentance; the second, obedience; the third, imitation of Christ; and now the fourth, which we are from these verses to discourse upon, is, the love of our brethren, 'He that saith he is the light,' &c.

In these three verses we have two general parts considerable,

A grace *proposed*, the vice *opposed*.

The *proposition* is in the 10th verse; the *opposition* in the 9th and 11th verses.

And inasmuch as the grace is in order of nature before the vice; and (according to that geometrical maxim, *Rectum est index sui et obliqui*), the way to know when we commit the sin is to understand the nature of the grace; and yet further, since the opposition is intended as an amplification of the proposition, I shall therefore, in handling these verses, begin with the middlemost, wherein is contained,

The thesis or grace proposed, 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.'

In the discussion whereof be pleased to observe two things: the nature and the benefit of the grace; the former in the subject, the latter in the predicate of the proposition.

1. The subject of the proposition, 'He that loveth his brother.' So that the grace here set before us is the love of our brother. St Austin, speaking of love, hath observed a fourfold object,\* whereabout it is conversant, *Quod supra nos, quod nos sumus, quod juxta nos, quod infra nos*; the first above us, namely, God; the second ourselves; the third about us; the fourth beneath us, our bodies; and as he well observeth, two

\* Aug. de doctr. Christ. l. i. c. 23.



of them are so natural, that there is no need of a precept, to wit, ourselves, and especially our bodies; and therefore the command of love is expressed in these two, the love of God and of our neighbour, the latter of which our apostle here calls for.

If you look backward upon the 5th verse of this chapter, you find the apostle speaking of the love of God, that being indeed the primary object of love;\* and here he adviseth to the love of our brother, these two being not contrary, but subordinate. A little after he speaketh of two loves which are inconsistent, 'the love of the Father' and 'the love of the world,' verse 15; but it is not so with the love of God and our brother; nay, indeed, the former is a cause of the latter, and the latter a testimony of the former. Love to our brother is effected by our love to God, and our love to God is perfected by love to our brother; and therefore very fitly doth our apostle here speak of the latter (having before mentioned the former), because he is now about to describe the word or commandment, the keeping whereof perfects, that is, declareth our love to God to be perfect or sincere, which is no other than brotherly love.

For the better unfolding of which, I shall briefly resolve these two queries:

What that love is which we owe to our brother?

Quest. 1. Who that brother is whom we are so to love?

Not to discourse of love at large, be pleased to know, that to love our brother, as Zanchy well defineth,† it is to have our mind so inclined towards him, as that we will, and to the utmost of our power, confer good upon him. Suitable hereunto is that description of the philosopher, love is βούλεσθαι τα ἀγαθὰ καὶ κατὰ δύναμιν βουλομένα πράττειν, to will that which is good to, and, as far as we are able, to do that which we will for another. If, then, you ask, What is the formal act of this love? I answer, ἐννοια, benevolence *amor affectivus*. If What is the proper effect of it? the answer is, ἐνποιουα, beneficence *amor effectivus*.‡ Nor can love be where either of these is wanting. On the one hand, if there be beneficence, and not benevolence, it is not love. When St Paul saith, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 'Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing,' he intimateth that it is possible for a man to bestow his goods on the poor, and yet want love; liberality being sometimes a fruit rather of vain glory than charity. On the other hand, if there be benevolence and not beneficence, it is not love; since it is only *velleitis*, not *voluntas*, a wishing and woulding, not a serious willing. *Trahit secum animorum propensio omnem beneficentiam*, saith Gualter; a cordial propension carrieth with it a vigorous prosecution. In this respect St James, chap. ii. 16, chideth those who,

'when a brother or sister is naked, and destitute of daily bread, say to them, Depart in peace, be you warmed, be you filled, notwithstanding they gave them not those things which were needful for the body.' That is not charity which only expresseth itself in words, not works; love being an emanation of the will, in a way of adhesion to its object, cannot but will all good to the object loved; and since the will is the queen regent of the whole man (in which regard the actions of all the other faculties are called the imperate acts of the will), commanding the execution of its inclination, it must needs follow, that he who seriously wills, cannot but really endeavour his brother's good; and therefore that *velleitis*, which, like an empty cloud, vanisheth away without efficacy, is not an act of love; in which respect some not unfitly give the sense of ἀγαπᾶν by ἀγειν τὸ πᾶν, to move every stone, and use all means for accomplishing the good we will. Only that caution, *according to our ability*, must be here inserted; for as St Paul saith in this very case, 'If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not,' 2 Cor. viii. 12. Where there is want of ability, benevolence, though it cannot be profitable to our brother, yet is acceptable to God, and ought to be to him without beneficence. The one, then, namely, a good will, is absolutely and always necessary; the other, to wit, good works, conditionally, and with this limitation, so far as they are within the sphere of our activity and compass of our ability.

Besides this general definition of love, it will not be amiss somewhat more particularly to inquire into the several ways of exercising it, that we may see how many lines meet in this centre of love, which may both fully and briefly be delineated by a double reference.

1. To the present condition of our brother, who

Either hath the good already; and then love first blesseth God, and next congratulateth him, rejoicing him at the presence, and willing the continuance, yea, increasing of it, so far as may be good and expedient for him;

Or else he wants the good, and is distressed by some kind of evil; and then love beareth a part with him in his sufferings by sympathy, wiping away his tears with the sponge of her compassion, yea, not only so, but endeavoureth to relieve him in, and deliver him out of his affliction; above all, praying with earnest prayer and supplication to God for him.

2. To the several kinds of good, which concern this life, and that which is to come. Thus love,

1. Willeth and endeavoureth chiefly the spiritual good of his soul, Gal. vi. 1, 1 Thess. v. 14, instructing his ignorance, rebuking his wickedness, exciting his negligence, supporting his weakness, resolving his doubtfulness, laying forth readily what gifts God hath vouchsafed to her; yet still within the compass of her calling, for the edification of others.

\* Vide Naorg. in loc.

† Zanch. in loc.

‡ Arist. Ethic. lib. ix. cap. 5. Biel in. iii. sert. dist. 27, art. 1.

2. Next she wisheth well to, and taketh care of, his temporal advantage, in body, name, estate; feeding the belly, clothing the back of her brother, and so making the one her barn, and the other her wardrobe, and both her treasury, concealing those secret faults which might, and confuting those false slanders which do, impair his credit; finally, seeking the things of another, his outward welfare, gain, prosperity, as well as her own, 1 Cor. xiii. 5; yea, when need requireth, throwing the fat dung of her wealth upon the barren soil of her brother's mean estate.

By this time you see both the intent and the extent of the act of love, which is here required. Pass we on to the object, whereabout it ought to be conversant; and so to a resolution of the second question, Who this brother is whom we ought thus to love?

To this end, you may please to take notice of a double fraternity, to wit, carnal and spiritual; the one is by the blood of man, the other by the blood of Christ.

1. Carnal brotherhood, in its utmost latitude, reacheth very far; nor can we too far extend the meaning of *brother* in the text, according to this notion. For the clearing whereof observe these particulars.

1. *Brother* in the first and strict acception, is predicated of those who have the same immediate parents; the word ἀδελφός, coming from ἀ, signifying ὁμοῦ, and δελφός, uterus, intimateth as much. One that cometh out of the same womb, the same loins, hath the same father and mother with another, is most properly a brother.

2. *Brother* is sometimes enlarged further to affinity; and so kinsmen are in Scripture phrase called *brethren*. The Jews say, concerning Christ, 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?' Mark vi. 3, whenas yet we rationally conceive, that the blessed virgin never had child besides him, and as he is called her first-born, because none before him, so we read not of any she had after him, and therefore he her only one. So that his kindred and allies are called his brethren and sisters, according to the usual form of speech among the Jews.

3. *Brother* is sometimes yet more largely applied to all those who are of the same country. Thus, where the Jews are forbid to take usury of a brother, and required to set him king over them, 'whom the Lord their God should choose, from among their brethren,' Dent. xvii. 15, *brother* is manifestly taken in opposition to a *stranger*, one of another nation; so that not only *cognatione* but *natione*, by kindred but country, there cometh in a brotherhood.

4. *Brother* is yet capable of a far greater extension, and so taketh in all men, inasmuch as there is not only *identitas natura*, a specific identity of nature, but *originis*, a numerical identity of original. He is

in strict sense a brother, who hath the same immediate parents; well may he be a brother in a large sense who hath the same mediate parents. Thus, all men came from the loins of one man Adam, and from the womb of one woman Eve, in which respect the apostle saith, Acts xvii. 26, 'He hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth.' Indeed, all angels have the same intellectual nature one with another; but they did not all come from one angel, but were severally and immediately created; whereas God (though he could have created millions) made but one man, and ordained that out of him all the race of mankind should proceed, in which regard every man is brother to another. And, therefore, Tertullian writing to the heathen saith,\* *fratres etiam vestri sumus jure natura matris unius*, we Christians and you heathen are brethren in a natural way, as having the same original. Thus, as circles in the water do enlarge themselves, one greater than the other, so do the acceptions of this word. If now you shall ask me in what acception brother is here to be taken, I answer with Augustine, Estius, and Danaeus; † *Hoc loco fratrem omnem hominem debemus accipere*, in the largest, as including every man. St Gregory speaketh of this duty of love, ‡ well observeth, *aliud est quod sponte impenditur natura, aliud quod preceptis divinis ex charitate debetur obedientia*: there is doubtless something more intended by the precept than what we are prompted to by nature. To love our countrymen, our friends, our brother, is that which we are naturally inclined to, so that they who do not perform it are justly branded as without natural affection; whence, by the way, we may see what an unnatural age we live in, wherein Englishmen are so cruel to one another, kinsmen worry each other, yea, one brother betrayeth and supplanteth another. But surely the contrary to those horrid acts, I mean natural affection, is not all that is here intended; it is the love of all men which is required of us. According to this notion, *frater* and *proximus*, brother and neighbour, are of equal extent, and so the mandate is, φιλοπλησία, the love of our neighbour or brother, which is indeed φιλαδελφία, of every man. True it is, our love must be regular and orderly; and therefore, *ceteris paribus*, other things being alike, we must prefer a brother before a kinsman, a kinsman before a countryman, a countryman before an alien. But yet so that, as far as we are able, the beams of our love may scatter themselves throughout the world.

And thus to love our brother is to love every man.

1. *Sive bonum, sive malum*, as well the bad as the good. God 'causeth his sun to shine, and his rain to fall, upon the unjust no less than the just,' § and wo must express our love to the wicked as well as godly.

\* Tert. Apol. c. xxxix.

† Aug. de temp. serm. 61. Estius, Dan. in loc.

‡ Gr. mor. hom. xviii. in Evang.

§ Carthus. in loc.



2. *Sive amicum, sive inimicum*, as well enemy as friend. It is Christ's express precept, 'Love your enemies,' Luke vi. 32; and (as St Austin \* truly), *Hæc est vera et germana charitas*, this is right Christian charity. To wish well to those that wish well to us, to do good to them that do good to us, is no more than what publicans do (so our blessed Saviour); nay, than what thieves, dragons, wolves, and all sorts of beasts do; so that fore-mentioned father. But to wish well to them that wish us ill, and do good to them that do us hurt, this is that which Christians ought to practise; yea, as Tertulian † truly, *solorum Christianorum*, only they can do it. 'If thy enemy hunger,' saith St Paul, Rom. xii. 20, 'feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;' the Hebrew word in the proverb, whence St Paul borroweth it, Prov. xxv. 21, 22, is rendered by Vatablus, *propina ei aquam*, not only 'give him drink,' but 'drink to him' as a token of love, that it may appear, however he is towards thee, thou art reconciled to him. Excellent to this purpose is that advice of Gregory Nazianzen, ‡ *ἔπιπρωμεν ἀδελφοὶ καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἡμᾶς*, we must say brethren unto them that hate us, and accordingly express brotherly love to them. And thus, in this construction of *brother*, we have beheld the extension of love, how far it reacheth in regard of the objects about which it is conversant.

2. But besides this carnal fraternity between all men, there is a spiritual brotherhood between all Christians; they have all the same father, even the 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who begetteth them again,' 1 Peter i. 3, 4; they have the same mother, the church, 'Jerusalem from above,' which bringeth them forth, Gal. iv. 26; they all are washed in the same laver of regeneration, baptism, Titus iii. 5; partake of the same immortal seed, 1 Peter i. 23, and are nourished by the same sincere milk of the word, chap. ii. 2; finally, they are all begotten to the same undefiled inheritance, heirs of the same glory; *ἀδελφοὺς τοῖς τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ ἀναγεννηθέντας προσαγορεύομεν*, saith Clemens Alexandrinus, § we call them brethren who are born anew of the same word. Yea, *quanto dignius fratres et dicuntur, et habentur?* saith Tertulian. || How much more deservedly than other men are they called and accounted brethren, who acknowledge one Father, God, have drank of one spirit of holiness, and are brought forth of the same womb of ignorance, into the glorious light of evangelical truth! A brother in the sense above mentioned is only so by nature, but in this by grace; that is only a brother on the left hand, but this on the right hand; that of the earth, earthly, but this from heaven, heavenly. In this sense some expositors, and as I conceive most rationally, take the word here, this name *brother*

being by the apostle, and afterwards in the primitive times, in common language given to all, and only those who did embrace Christian religion; and which maketh this interpretation more manifest is, that our apostle in the next chapter phraseth it, 'love the brethren,' chap. iii. 10, which seemeth to indigitate a certain society of men, so called. Yea, in the fifth chapter at the beginning, chap. v. 1, he describeth him whom here he calls *brother* to be one that is 'begotten of God.'

According to this construction, that which is here required, is called by the apostle Peter, 2 Peter i. 7, Gal. vi. 10, *φιλᾶδελφία*, brotherly kindness, and is distinguished as a particular species from its genus, *ἀγάπη*, (which is presently annexed) charity. As then there is a general love which belongeth to all men, so a special love which belongeth to all Christians; and as we must 'do good to all men,' so 'especially to the household of faith.' Indeed, seeing the Christian brother hath a double cause of love in him that is God's image as a man, and God's grace as a Christian, we ought to deal by him as Joseph did by his brother Benjamin, whose mess was five times greater than the rest of his brethren.

If any shall yet further inquire, why our apostle speaking of this love to a Christian, calls him by the name of a brother? I answer, For these three reasons, because this name of *brother* carrieth in it an obligation to, a specification and modification of, that love which is here required, \* since we must love a Christian, *quia, quatenus, qualis*, because he is a brother, inasmuch as he is a brother, and with such a love as is among brothers.

1. This word *brother* carrieth with it a strong obligation to love. *In fratris voce ratio*, so Danaeus, it is an urgent reason why we should love a Christian, because he is our brother. All relation is a ground of affection; and hence it is a man loveth anything that is his. The nearer the relation, the greater tie to love, and therefore the more reason why a brother should be beloved. The nearest relation is that which is spiritual, † and therefore yet greater reason to love a Christian, who is ours, our brother; yea, our brother in Christ. When Moses saw two Israelites, countrymen, struggling together, he said to them, 'Sirs, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' ‡ Acts vii. 26. When Abraham and Lot (kinsmen) were likely to fall out, saith Abraham, 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee; for we are brethren,' Gen. xiii. 8. When Socrates saw two brethren striving one with another, he told them they did as if the two hands, which were made to help, should beat each other, so that since Chris-

\* Inter fratres communis debet esse metus, gaudium, dolor.—Tertul.

† Perfectior est fraternitas spiritualis, quam carnalis, &c.—Ambros. ser. 9.

‡ Aug. serm. 27, de verb. ap. ost.

\* Aug. de temp. serm. 61.—Id. *ibid.* † Tert. ad scap.

‡ Gregor. Naz. orat. 41.

§ Clem. Alex. Stromat. lib. ii.

|| Tert. Apolog. cap. xxxix.

tians are brethren in the highest and closest relation, this should be a great engagement upon them to love.

2. This word *brother* intimateth a specification of this love in regard of its object, which is then rightly placed when it is upon a brother as he is a brother, that is, a Christian as he is a Christian. One that is a brother in this spiritual notion may be my natural brother or kinsman, and then to love him is what nature dictates; or he is my friend and benefactor, and so to love him gratitude teacheth; or he is able to do me either an injury or a courtesy, so that I have cause to fear the one and hope the other; and in this respect to love him, self-love prompts me. Or (once more) he may be a man of rare natural and acquired endowments, and to love him for this ingenuity moves me; but to love him because he is a brother, in a spiritual sense, this is that which Christianity inciteth to, and this only is a right Christian love. Indeed, thus to love him, is to love him in reference to God and Christ, because he hath the grace of God in him, the image of God upon him. To love him as a brother in this sense is to love him as a son of God, a member of Christ, and (as St Jerome's phrase is,\* *Diligere Christum habitantem in Augustino*) to love God, and Christ dwelling in him.

And now, if any shall say it is hard, nay, impossible, to know any man to be such a brother, and therefore how can I love him *as such* when I cannot know him to be such? I answer, that there is a great deal of difference between the judgment of certainty and charity. Love doth not need nor require infallible, but only probable signs; and therefore whosoever doth profess the true faith of Christ, and doth not by a flagitious conversation give that profession the lie, love taketh him to be a brother; and to love one because he at least seemeth to be such a one by his external profession and conversation, so as the more Christian graces we discover in him, the more we are affected towards him, this is that which most especially falleth under the precept of loving our brother.

3. Yet, once more, there is in this word *brother* implied a modification of that love which we must express towards Christians, to wit, that it must be such as that which is between brethren, and that more properly in two things, the instancy and the constancy, the fervency and the permanency of it.

(1.) Brotherly love is fervent. It is a relation of the greatest endearment, partly as it is natural, not founded in choice, as it is between man and wife, and between friends; and partly as it is between equals, not like that between parents and children, whose love towards their parents hath more of reverence than sweetness in it; hence it is that, as no discord, so neither is any love like to that which hath been found among brethren. Such ought our love to be towards Christians, a bright shining, an hot flaming love. That exhortation of St Paul, Rom. xii. 10, is very observ-

\* Hierom. Ep.

able to this purpose, 'Be you kindly affected one to another with brotherly love,' where the Greek word *φιλοστόργοι*, is rendered by Tertullian\* *affectuosi*, both which note an eminent measure and degree of affection. Such is brotherly, such ought to be Christian, love, very affectionate. Memorable in this respect was the example of the primitive Christians, of whom that fore-mentioned father† saith, they did love one another *ad stuporem Gentilium*, to the astonishment of the heathen, so much that the heathen cried out with admiration, *Vide ut invicem se diligunt*, See how they love one another.

(2.) Brotherly love is lasting. It is natural, and therefore perpetual; it is a relation that ceaseth not till death, and therefore the affection may well remain. A brother, if not very unnatural, will own his brother in rags, and love him in his lowest estate. Such must Christian love be towards a brother of low as well as high degree, in persecution as well as prosperity, when he wants us, not we him; nor must our love cease to act towards him till he cease to be amongst us. This was that no doubt which the apostle aimed at when he saith, Heb. xiii. 1, 'Let brotherly love continue,' thereby minding what the love of brethren is, and what the love of Christians ought to be, a continuing and enduring love.

And now, what other use should we make of all this discourse upon the nature of this grace, but hereby to examine ourselves whether our love be of the right stamp, to wit, such a love as is ready to every good word and work, as extendeth itself to our very enemies, as is chiefly fixed upon Christians, and that because they are so. And so much shall suffice to be spoken of the first part, the subject of the thesis. I now proceed more briefly to the

2. *Predicates*, which are plainly two, describing the benefit of this grace, the one in regard of the condition, and the other of conversation of such a person. His condition is happy, for he 'abideth in the light;' his conversation is sweet, for 'there is no occasion of stumbling in him.'

1. He that loveth his brother is said to abide in the light. It is not unfitly here taken notice of by Zanchy; that as in the eighth verse our apostle argueth, *à causa ad effectum*, from the cause to the effect, this thing is true in you, namely, the practice of love, because 'the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth,' to wit, of grace; so in this verse he reasons *ab effecto ad causam*, from the effect to the cause, he in whom this is true that he loves his brother, is brought out of that darkness, and abides in the light.

Light is a metaphor variously applied in Scripture. We may here take it three ways.

1. This metaphor of light is sometimes attributed to Christ; so by our apostle in his Gospel, when he calleth him the light, of whom John the Baptist did

\* Tertul. adv. Marc. l. 5.

† Zanch. in loc.

† Apolog. c. 39.



hear witness; by himself, when he saith, 'I am the light of the world;' and thus abiding in the light is the same with that of abiding in him. Thus it is an undoubted truth, he that loveth his brother abideth in Christ; that branch which participateth of the juice and sap of the root must needs abide in it. Love is the sap that was in Christ, and therefore he that partaketh of love from Christ must abide in him. That member which suffereth with the rest of the body declareth itself to be in the body. He that by loving sympathiseth with his brother, manifesteth himself to be a member of Christ.

2. Sometimes by this metaphor of light the gospel, together with the saving knowlege of it, are represented. Both these we meet with in one chapter, 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6, whilst St Paul expressly mentioneth, first, 'the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,' and presently, 'the light of the knowlege of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Indeed, in the one is the light without, and the other is as the light within, and he that loveth his brother abideth in this light, hereby declaring that he hath indeed learned and is rightly acquainted with evangelicall doctrine. To this purpose is Justinian's note,\* *Eo lumine dignum se ostendit qui luminis ductum sequitur*, by following the conduct of this light he sheweth himself in some measure worthy of it, because answerable to it.

3. But lastly, this metaphor of light is used to set forth grace and holiness. In this sense, no doubt, St Peter is to be understood when he saith of believers that they are 'called by God out of darkness into his marvellous light;† and thus the light in which he that loveth his brother is said to abide is the same with that in the former chapter, chap. i. 6, where we have the phrase of 'walking in the light;' and the meaning of the word is briefly this, he that loveth his brother is in a state of grace. Charity is an evident demonstration of sanctity. St Paul, reckoning up the fruits of the Spirit, placeth love in the front, as if there were no clearer fruit of the Spirit's residence in us than the exercise of this duty of love. Indeed, there is a love which only argueth good nature; such is that of a kinsman, a friend; but to love an enemy, and that because it is an evangelicall injunction, and to love a Christian because he is a Christian, is such a flower as groweth not in nature's garden, but is a fruit of the Spirit, and so a testimony of grace.‡

But because I shall have more full occasion of discussing this in the next chapter, I pass on to the

2. Next benefit which attendeth upon brotherly love, as it is expressed in those words, 'and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.'

Not to insist on the several acceptions of the Greek word *σκανδαλον*, as it is used by the LXX in the

Old Testament, and by the sacred writers in the New,\* this being already done by the late learned annotator; it may suffice to know that here, according to its derivation from *σκάζω*, *claudico*, it signifies any rub or block cast in a man's way, which may endanger halting or falling, and therefore is fitly here rendered 'occasion of stumbling.' In what sense this is true, that there is no occasion of stumbling in him that loveth his brother, expositors somewhat vary, yet so as that they are all consistent with the analogy of faith and scope of the place.

1. Some† understand scandal in an active sense, and thus render it, there is no occasion of stumbling given by him; he taketh care that neither by opprobrious language, injurious action, or vicious example, he give a just offence, so as may occasion the fall and ruin of his brother. St Paul, writing to the Philippians, chap. ii. 15, exhorts them to be blameless and harmless; where the former word (according to its derivation) signifies that we must not be as beasts who push with their horns, and thereby do much harm; and the latter word signifies one, *de quo nullus queri potest*, of whom none can justly complain; and they are well put together, since, as St Austin aptly,‡ *Quis de illo juste queritur, qui nemini malè vult*, he that is harmless must needs be blameless; nor can he be justly complained of by, who doth no injury to, another. Such is every one who loveth his brother. Love *nec retia tendit, nec ladere intendit*, neither doth nor desireth another's wrong; it 'worketh no ill,' saith the apostle, Rom. xiii. 10; and again in another place, 1 Cor. xiii. 5, it 'thinketh not evil.' Wisdom avoideth the snares which are laid by, love layeth no snares for, others; yea, so cautelous is charity, that she will rather abridge herself of liberty, than do what may offend her weak brother; and therefore St Paul, Rom. xiv. 15, expressly saith to him, who did grieve his brother with his meat, which yet was in itself lawful to eat, 'now walkest thou not charitably.' Indeed, this is that which floweth from the very nature of love; for since it is, as hath been already shewed, a willing of good, it must needs infer a nilling of evil to my brother, it being impossible that I should at the same time will and nill the same thing to the same person; and therefore since, if I will good, I must nill evil, no wonder if, by him that hath a true love, there be no occasion of stumbling given to his brother.

2. Others interpret scandal in a passive sense. There is no scandal or occasion of stumbling given to him; not but that there will be blocks laid in the way, but he passeth over them, and so falleth not at them; according to that of Solomon, Prov. xix. 17, 'It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression.' To this purpose is Zanchy's note upon the text,§ it is not *non est illi scandalum*, but *non est in illo scandalum*, finding an

\* Justin. in loc.

† In splendore gratiæ gratum facientis — *Carthus.*

‡ *Amare amantem, naturæ, inimicium, charitatis est.* — *Aquin. vi Cat. sup. Matth. 5.*

\* Vide Hierom. in Matth. xv.

† *Carth. Arct. Est. Gualt. in loc.*

‡ *Aug de perfect. justitiæ.*

§ *Zanch. in loc.*

emphasis in that *iv*, which Grotius\* conceiveth to be a pleonasm. There is no offence† to him, but not in him; that is, though it may be given by others, yet it is not taken by him. In which respect are those expressions of St Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 'Charity suffereth long, is not easily provoked, beareth all things;' and St Austin‡ observeth upon this place, *Qui diligit fratrem tolerat omnia propter unitatem*, he that loveth his brother, for unity's sake beareth with all things. The back of love will sustain a load of wrongs, and when it is moved with violence, it is not removed from patience. It is St Peter's phrase, 1 Pet. iv. 8, and he borroweth it from the wise man, Prov. x. 12, 'Love covereth a multitude of sins;' and as it covereth them from others by concealment, so, which is especially intended, from herself by connivance and forgiveness; and thus she exerciseth in respect not of a few, but many, injuries; herein being (to use St Chrysostom's comparison) like to fire, which burneth up not only a few sticks, but a great wood. Thus, whilst faith is a resolute grace, having *cedo nulli* for her motto, love is a yielding grace, and so, passing over, is not offended at those wrongs which like stumbling-blocks are thrown in her way.

3. But there is another construction of these words, which as it is of no less verity, so is of greater latitude; by *scandal* to understand transgressions, these being those stumbling-blocks which cause us to fall and hurt, yea, ruin ourselves; and thus the sense of the clause is, He who loveth his brother escapeth those heinous sins into which others fall, walking in the commandments of the Lord blameless. This is that which taketh in the other constructions, for inasmuch as he doth not willingly give offence, therefore he avoideth those sins by which his brother is offended; and since he doth not easily take offence, he avoideth those sins to which others are provoked. It were easy to instance in the several commandments how the love of our brother prevents the breaches of them. He that loveth his brother because he is a brother, much more loveth his Father God; and loving God, abhorreth those profanations of his worship, name, day, which ungodly men wound themselves by. Again, he that loveth his brother will reverence him if his superior, dare not injure him in his wife, estate, name, or anything that is his. And if you please to put these two together, *abiding in the light* and *no occasion of stumbling*, you shall find the one a manifest reason of the other. By the opposition of being in darkness and walking in darkness to abiding in the light, it appeareth that abiding in the light implieth being and walking in the light, whereby he escapeth whatever might be a stone of offence or stumbling-block in his way. 'If any man' (saith our blessed Saviour) 'walketh in the light, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world;' and thus he that loveth his brother, having the light

of saving knowledge and grace to shine before him, *nunquam impingit*, so Grotius,\* never falls, but *inoffenso gradu pergit*, so another, goeth on inoffensively in the path of eternal life. Indeed, we must take this with some restriction, not as if he that loved his brother did not sometimes fall into sin, but *οὐκ ἐστὶ σκανδαλον*, not into scandalous and injurious sins, and this, too, with reference to his abiding in the light. It is possible for a charitable Christian to step out of the light, and then he may fall foully; but so far as he is regenerate and abideth in the light, he is free from such sins.

4. Once more: Grotius conceiveth‡ that the apostle in these words hath some reference to the LXX. reading of the 165th verse of the 119th Psalm, *οὐκ ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς σκανδαλον*, 'Great peace have they that love the law, and nothing shall offend them;' and so it intimateth the inward tranquillity which, as they that love the law, so he that loveth his brother doth enjoy, so as that, whatsoever befalls him, he is not disturbed nor distracted by it. It is that, indeed, which followeth upon all the former; for since he neither justly giveth, nor quickly taketh, offence, and keepeth himself from gross sins in the course of his conversation, no wonder if he enjoys a serene calm in his soul; and though wicked men may be offended at him, yea, raise storms of persecution against him, yet he is at peace within. Excellent to this purpose is that of St Ambrose,‡ *Charitas pellit omnes tribulationes, non ut non eveniant, sed ut non noceant; quia licet exterius tribulationes insurgant, tamen vir justus interius non turbatur*: Charity driveth away all troubles; not that they do not come upon, but that they shall not do hurt to him, because though tribulations arise outwardly, he is not molested inwardly. That adage of the wise man, Prov. xii. 21, 'No evil shall happen to the just,' the vulgar Latin reads, *Non contristabit justum quicquid ei acciderit*, whatever happen to the just shall not vex and grieve him; and to use Hugo's philosophical comparison,§ as an accident is present and absent without the corruption of the subject, so tribulation when present as well as when absent, doth not perplex and disturb the just. Indeed, there is nothing occasions offence to such a man but sin, and therefore abiding in the light he is not stumbled at affliction. If you cast a spark of fire into the water, how soon is it quenched: so are all fears cast into a good conscience. When the sky is black with clouds, the stars, though they seem to be obscured, yet retain their proper lustre; and good men, when they seem in affliction to be clouded with sorrow, saith St Chrysostom,|| are not sorrowful but rather rejoicing.

And now what other use should we make of all that hath been said, than to press upon us that apostolical exhortation, 'walk in love'? Indeed, what way better

\* Grot. in loc.

† Id. ibid.

‡ Ambrose in Ps. cxviii.

§ Hugo ibid.

|| Chrysost. hom. i. in Ep. ad. Corinth and xvi. in Ep. ad. Heb.

\* Grot. ibid.

† Qu. 'there is offence?'—Ed.

‡ Aug. in Ep.



for us to walk in than this, which is so bright and lightsome, so plain and clear, so pure and pleasant? It is Solomon's assertion, Prov. xv. 19, 'The way of the righteous is made plain.' It is no less true of the charitable; in the way of love there is nothing to offend or molest, whilst purity is the track, and tran-

quillity our companion. You, then, that have not experienced this, begin; and you that have begun, go on. I think I need not bid you; your own experience cannot but encourage you in this sweet way, till you come to that country whither this way leads you, where the law is charity, the league unity, and the life eternity.

### SERMON XXXI.

*He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.—*  
1 JOHN II. 9-11.

**O**PPOSITA *juxta se posita magis illucescunt*, saith the logician, things of greatest distance set near in place do one illustrate the other. The sun never appeareth so gloriously as when breaking through a cloud. A freeman most prizeth his liberty when he seeth the prisoners' fetters and captives' chains; and Sarah becometh doubly beautiful when surrounded with the swarthy Egyptians. The dolorous noise of war is the best language to proclaim the sweetness of peace. Health is never so acceptable as when it brings letters of commendation from sickness; and virtue becometh more amiable when the contrary vice is represented. For this reason, no doubt, it is that, as painters draw black shadows to set off their pictures with a greater lustre, and some (I fear proud) ladies are wont to wear black patches, that their faces may seem the more lovely, so do orators frequently set virtues and vices together, that the evil of the one may the more advance the good of the other. This way of illustration is that which is very observable in the penmen of sacred writ, especially those two, whom I may well call heaven's darlings—Solomon, who is styled Jedidiah, and John the beloved disciple. The one you may observe in his parables very often setting prudence and folly, with such like contraries, one by the other; and the other, in this epistle, and more properly in these verses, that he might the more commend the goodness of love, enlargeth his discourse in discovering the badness of hatred: 'He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother,' &c.

It is that part of the text I am now to handle; the antithesis, or opposition, set down in the 9th and 11th verses. But before I enter upon the severals in this part, it will not be amiss, once for all, to take notice of that which we shall find very usual in this epistle, namely, the repetition and ingemination of the same sense, yea, sometimes of the same sentence. This, indeed, is the first time we have fully met with this; for though in the first chapter, ver. 8, 10, we find the subject of one proposition, 'if we say we have no sin,' and the predicate of another, 'cleansing from all sin,' ver. 7, 9, yet we meet not with one entire proposition twice mentioned till now, where these words, 'He that

hateth his brother is in darkness,' is both in the 9th and 11th verses. Indeed, this repetition is not without some variation. In the 9th verse, there is an enlargement of this subject: it is not barely, 'He that hateth his brother,' but 'He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother;' and in the 11th verse, there is an amplification of the predicate, not only 'he is in darkness,' but 'he walketh in darkness,' &c. Yet still, it is for substance the same thing which is intended, and the same words are repeated in both the verses. And, indeed, it is that which is easily observable, not only in this, but the rest of the sacred books. That of David, the sweet singer of Israel, Ps. cxxxvi., is remarkable, who twenty-six times warbleth over the same note, 'For his mercy endureth for ever;' and of Christ, that unparalleled preacher, who (as probably appeareth by comparing the two evangelists, Mat. v. 1, Luke vi. 20) preached the same sermon twice.

Nor are these repetitions vain tautologies. It is not without good reason that the penmen of sacred writ do sometimes take this course in respect of themselves, the matter of their writing, and those to whom they wrote.

1. Those holy penmen, by these repetitions, did declare the zeal and vehemency of their spirits in pressing what they wrote upon the people. What was it which caused Solomon's father (as himself relates it, Prov. iv. 14, 15) to multiply expressions to the same purpose, yea, to iterate the same expressions in dehorting him from evil company, 'enter not,' 'go not,' 'avoid,' 'pass by,' 'turn from,' 'pass away,' but his sense of the danger, and desire that he might avoid it. And again, what moved his mother to amplify her appellations in the beginning of her counsel to him,—chap. xxxi. 2, 'What, my son, and what, the son of my womb, and what, the son of my vows,'—but her affectionate desire that he should hearken to her? Indeed, no marvel if the boiling spirit run over in words, and the zeal of the affection double, nay, triple, the expression. Thus was it here (as Bullinger well observeth)\* with St John, *præ ardore suo*, such was

\* Bullinger. in loc.

the vehemency of his hatred of the sin of hatred, that he can never enough declaim against it, and therefore not only once, but again he reproveth it.

2. Those sacred writers, by these ingeminations, intimate always that the things about which they write are of more than ordinary importance, and necessary concernment to be known and believed in matters of faith, to be avoided or performed in matters of life; yea, and sometimes that there is no less difficulty than necessity, and whilst they are things which must, and ought, yet they are not easily believed, avoided, or practised. Upon these grounds, no doubt, it was that Solomon iterated his doctrine of the world's vanity, Eccles. i. 2; and Christ inculcated upon Peter the duty of feeding his sheep, John xx. 21. Nor is it improbable that St John here had both these in his eye: he well knew how much the very being of Christianity did depend upon avoiding this sin, and exercising the contrary grace; how hard it is to cast out this poison of hatred, where it is once harboured; and withal, that as, the usurper being ejected, the right heir gets possession, and the old form being corrupted, the matter is easily susceptible of a new; so, if he could eradicate this weed of hatred, he should with a greater facility plant the flower of love; and, therefore, no wonder he doth ingeminate his discourse of the vile-ness of this sin.

3. Those divine scribes thought these repetitions very needful for those to whom they wrote, in regard of the dulness of their minds, and weakness of their memories, and hardness of their hearts. 'To write the same things to you,' saith the apostle Paul to the Philippians, chap. iii. 1, 'for you it is safe,' to wit, lest at the first you should not rightly understand them, or not remember them, or not be suitably affected with them. 'God speaketh once and twice,' saith Elihu, 'and man perceiveth it not;' our memories are of weak retention, and therefore need renewed incitation. The heart of man is by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxvi. 26, compared to an heart of stone, and it is not one blow of the hammer will break it. 'The words of the wise,' saith Solomon, Eccles. xii. 11, 'are as goads and nails;' and truly we are so dull that these goads must be often thrust into our sides; so obdurate, that it is not one stroke will drive these nails to the head. *Disciplinam præceptorum inculcationibus densamus*, saith Tertullian appositely; \* we thicken, and so, as it were, we strengthen our instructions by inculcations, which is no more than what the need of the people requireth.

The consideration hereof is that which should teach both the teachers and the people.

1. Let it not be grievous to us ministers to repeat, and thereby inculcate, our doctrines upon the auditors. If a musician shall only strike one string, it maketh no music; but it is fitting for a preacher to insist upon one and the same truth. Nor must we here stand upon

\* Tert. Apolog., cap. xxxix.

our own credit, when it comes in competition with the people's profit. If it were not grievous to that eminent apostle, Paul, Philip. iii. 1, why should it be to any of us? We are not only instructors, but remembrancers. So St Peter accounted himself, where he saith, 2 Peter iii. 1, 'I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance;' and what is the office of a remembrancer, but to repeat things formerly done or spoken? That cannot be often enough taught, which can never be well enough learned.\* Nor yet do I hereby intend to patronise those illiterate or lazy, ignorant or negligent preachers, who use iterations for want of premeditation, and therefore say the same thing again, because they know not what to say next: far be it from me; only I would mind myself and others how requisite it is we should sometimes, upon some occasions, reinforce, by repetition, some doctrines upon our hearers.

2. Let it not be tedious to the auditors to hear the same truths sometimes repeated by the minister; we must not esteem it a dishonour, nor should you account it a burden. It is that indeed to which hearers are very prone. *Aut novum, aut nihil*, some new thing, or nothing, is the cry of many; if we come with a *scitote*, something that they knew not before, they listen; but if with a *mementote*, something formerly delivered, they think their patience abused. As they say of drinking wine, the first is for necessity, the second for pleasure, the third for sleep; so do auditors, with a little inversion, account of a sermon: the first time they hear it with delight, not the second except of necessity, and if they meet with it the third time they fall asleep. How sad is it that, if we hear an excellent lesson on an instrument, we call for it once and again, nay,

'Decies repetita placebunt.'

We are not easily weary of it, and yet we care not to hear the songs of Zion rehearsed. Who ever complained of the renewed rising of the same sun, or loathed his daily bread? Why, then, are we so quickly cloyed in spirituals? But especially repetitions most vex us, when they are of reprehensions, such as this is in my text. We love not to have our sores too often rubbed upon; but tell me, are you not willing that the physician should repeat his purging course, though the potion be bitter, for the health of your body? And why so loath that we should repeat our reproofs for the health of your souls? Divine and excellent to this purpose is that ratiocination of Seneca in his advice to Lucilius, To them that say *Quousque eadem?* How long shall we hear the same admonitions? answer, *Quousque eadem peccabitis?* How long will you commit the same faults? *Remedia ante vultis quam vitia desinere?* Will you leave off the remedy before the disease is cured? *Ego vero cò magis dicam, et quia*

\* Nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam satis discitur.



*recusatis perseverabo*;\* nay, I will so much the rather reiterate, and because you are troubled at it, I will persevere in it. The truth is, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, whether it please or displease, we must warn you of the same sins, admonish of the same duties, bespeak you with the same counsels again and again. But it will be better for you, if you are not only content, but willing to hear the same instructions frequently urged. Let it be true of vain pleasures,

‘Commendat rarior usus.’

that the less they are used, the more they are commended. Far be such thoughts from us in reference to the sacred oracles. Those Gentiles, when they had heard Paul, Acts xiii. 42, besought him to preach *τα αὐτὰ ἑήματα*, the same words the next Sabbath day. Thus should you, if any doctrine have had a kindly influence upon your spirits, entreat the reiteration of it. Who knoweth what a second birth may bring forth? And if at any time you hear the minister beating upon the same anvil, pressing the same doctrine, or rebuking the same sin, reflect upon thyself, and say, Surely I have not yet sufficiently learned this lesson, I have not enough repented of this sin, and therefore I will give new attention, though it be an old instruction.

And thus much I have thought fit to discourse of this subject by way of apology, not for St John, whose divinely inspired writings need none, but for myself, if, in the handling of this epistle, I should sometimes have occasion to discuss the same things, and perhaps use the same expressions.

More particularly in this ingeminated opposition, be pleased to observe,

The sin specified, in these words, ‘He that hateth his brother.’

The state of the sinner described in the rest of the words: and that

*Imaginary*, wherein he supposeth himself to be, ‘He saith he is in the light.’

*Real*, in which indeed he is; set forth in several characters, in the end of the 9th, and the greatest part of the 11th. ‘He is in darkness even until now;’ and again, ‘He is darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.’

1. The first of these is the hinge upon which the antithesis turneth, and therefore I shall be the more large in unfolding it. To which end I shall discuss it two ways, by way of restriction and by way of enlargement; and accordingly discover exclusively what hatred is not within the compass of this sin, and then extensively how far this hatred reacheth, which is here declaimed against.

The exclusive restriction of this hatred will appear in these ensuing propositions.

1. There is a positive and there is a comparative,

\* Sen. ep. lxxxix.

there is an absolute and there is a relative, hatred. It is very observable, that Jacob’s loving Rachel more than Leah is called in the very next verse hating Leah, Gen. xxix. 30, 31. That which we less love than another, we are said to hate in comparison of that love we bear to the other; and thus it is not a sin but a duty to hate our brother, to wit, in comparison of Christ. It is our Saviour’s own assertion, Luke xiv. 26, ‘If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple:’ an expression seemingly very harsh, but easily understood. If compared with the other evangelist, St Matthew, chap. x. 37, where he brings in Christ, saith, ‘He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.’ We ought then to hate our nearest relations, that is, not love them more, nay, which is the meaning of the phrase, love them less than Christ. Hence it is, that when Christ’s glory and truth cometh in competition with the dearest of our relations, we must neglect children, cast off parents, reject the wife of our bosom, rather than deny Christ; yea, we must be averse to them if they go about to direct us from Christ. Thus that devout Paula, as St Jerome\* saith, *Nesciebat se matrem, ut Christi probaret ancillam*, that she might approve herself Christ’s handmaid, forgot that she was a mother. And that same father elsewhere asserteth it, † *Pietatis genus est impium esse pro domino*, it is a part of piety to be in some sense impious, and, out of love towards God, to hate our brother, and therefore this is not here to be understood.

2. It is one thing to hate our brother, and another thing to hate the sins of our brother; it is solidly determined by Aquinas, ‡ love is due to my brother *secundum id quod a Deo habet*, in respect of that which is communicated to him by God, whether nature, or grace, or both; but it is not due to him *secundum id quod habet a seipso et diabolo*, according to that which he hath from himself and the devil, to wit, sin and wickedness; and therefore it is lawful to hate my brother’s sin, but not his nature, much less his grace. *Laudabile odium odisse vitia*, saith Origen, § to hate evil is a commendable hatred, and that wherever we find it, not only in the bad but the good, the enormities of the one, but the infirmities in the other; not only in strangers and enemies, but kindred and friends, spying beams, nay, motes, in these as well as those, and abhorring them; we must hate this serpent wherever we find it, though in a garden, nay, though in our own habitations. Indeed, as Aquinas excellently, *Hoc ipsum, quod in fratre odimus culpam et defectum, pertinet ad fratris amorem*, this hatred of the vice is an effect of love to the person; so much is intimated when it is said, Lev. xix. 17, ‘Thou shalt

\* Hier. Ep. xxvii. c. 3.

† Hier. Ep. i. ad Hietrod.

‡ Aquin. 2da 2da Quest. 34. Art. iii. § Orig. in Rom.

not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him.' By shewing hatred to his sin in rebuking, we shew our love to him; and if we wish good to him, we cannot but hate what we see evil in him. This hatred is so far from being sinful, that it is not only lawful and laudable, but excellent, not a wicked but a pious, yea, a perfect hatred. According to that of St Austin,\* *Perfectio odii est in charitate cum nec propter vitia homines oderimus, nec vitia propter homines amemus*, it is at once the perfection of hatred and an argument of love, when we neither hate the man for the sin's sake, nor yet love the sin for the man's sake, but fix our love on the man, and our hatred on the sin.

3. There is *odium abominationis*, and *odium inimicitie*, an hatred of aversion, and an hatred of enmity; by the one we fly from, by the other we pursue after. Look as in love there is a benevolence whereby we will good to, and a complacence whereby we take delight in, another; so in hatred there is a strangeness whereby we avoid the society, and an enmity whereby we seek the mischief, of another. The former of these is not forbidden, but required and practised. Godly David saith of himself, Ps. xxvi. 5, 'I hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked;' and that of his practice was justifiable and imitable, since we must not only fly from the sin, but the sinner; yea, that we may shun the one, we must avoid the other. Timon was called *μισοάνθρωπος*, a man-hater, because he kept not company with any man save Alcibiades,† and we should all of us be haters of wicked men, shunning all needless converse and much more familiar acquaintance with them. It is St Paul's counsel to the Ephesians, chap. v. 11, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works' (he meaneth workers ‡) 'of darkness;' yea, it is the strict charge he layeth upon the Thessalonians, 2 Thes. iii. 6, 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.' We ought as much to hate familiarity with the wicked, as to tread upon burning coals, or go into an infected house; and therefore this kind of hatred is not here intended.

4. Once more, all hatred of § enmity, in respect of others, is not to be condemned, if they be enemies, not so much to us, as to the church, yea, God himself; and this not out of ignorance but malice, and so implacable. We may, we ought, to be enemies to them. Holy David hath set us a pattern hereof. When speaking to God he saith, Ps. cxxxix. 21, 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.' Hence, no doubt, are those imprecations and curses which we meet with in the Psalms, Ps. lix. 12, 13,

lxviii. 1, 2, wherein we find that holy man wishing, not only disappointment to the hopes, infatuation to the counsels, but destruction to the persons of Zion's adversaries. And surely thus far we may and ought to imitate him, as in general to pray against, and wish the ruin of all the church's irreconcilable adversaries; though as to particulars we must take heed of going too far in this way, it being difficult if not impossible for us determinately to assert concerning any one that he is an *implacable* enemy of God and religion; and yet when we see one who with Julian hath professed himself to be a Christian brother, and so far apostatising as openly to prosecute Christianity with utmost fury, notwithstanding manifold convictions; or who still, pretending to be a brother, oppugneth (with no less virulency though more subtilty) the Christian religion in its orthodox profession, swallowing up her revenues, forbidding her public services, stopping the mouths of her preachers, suffering blasphemies and heresies to obscure her, plucking up the pillars which should uphold her, and persecuting all that embrace her; and all this against clear convictions, which he either hath, or might have, did he not shut his eyes; together with frequent and multiplied admonitions. Since we can have very little or no hopes of such a man's conversion, we may and ought to desire of God (if he will not please to convert him) to confound not only his devices but his person, and to cut him off from the land of the living; only we must take heed to the frame and temper of our spirit, that this our hatred of, and wishing ill to him, purely proceed from a love to God's church, and a zeal for his glory, not out of any personal or private respect to our own revenge.

2. Having thus despatched the first way I proposed to tread in, namely, the restriction and exclusion, I shall now step into the other path, and let you see the extent and enlargement of this sin in these following assertions.

1. There are two sins, namely, envy and malice, which are as it were the ingredients of this hatred. St Paul seemeth to intimate so much, when he first mentioneth malice and envy as the *species*, and then hatred as the *genus*: Titus iii. 3, 'Living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' And indeed, since hatred (being opposed to love) is both a nilling good and willing evil to our brother, it must needs include in it both these, for,

1. Envy is (as Aquinas from Damascene well defineth it) *tristitia de alienis bonis*, a sorrow for the good of another. To this purpose Gregory Nyssen, putting the question, What is the cause of this disease? answereth *ἐν ἀδουμία ζῆν ἀδεῖζον*, our brother's prosperity. For which reason Plutarch\* compareth it to a blear eye, which is offended with the light; and the envious man is fitly resembled to an archer, who hath still some white paper or cloth for his mark at which he shooteth. Now, whence doth this sorrow arise, but

\* Aug. in Ps. cxxxix.

‡ Operatoribus.

† Cic. de Amicit.

§ Qu 'or'?—Ed.

\* Plut. mor.



from the act of hatred which consists in nilling; since because I nill the good to my brother which he hath, therefore I am troubled that he hath it. And hence it is that the Egyptians, envying the Israelites' multitude in Egypt, is called their hating them, when it is said, Ps. cv. 25, 'He turned their heart to hate his people.' Indeed, envy is an affection made up of grief and hatred; grief for the thing, and hatred of the person; and the hatred of the one is the cause of grief at the other.

Malice is (as Justinian well expresseth it) *improba adversus proximum cogitatio*, a wicked thought against our neighbour; or if you will have it in fewer yet fuller words, it is *nocendi desiderium*, a desire to hurt and injure our brother in any kind; and this is the proper act of hatred, which as it doth connote a nilling good, so it doth principally note a willing evil. This is observable in Esau, of whom the text saith, Gen. xxvii. 41, 'he hated Jacob;' and, if you will know how that appeareth, the end of the verse tells you, 'I will slay my brother Jacob.' In this regard, the fish among the Egyptians is made an hieroglyphic of hatred,\* because of all creatures it is most greedy to devour, and hatred fills the mind with injurious and devouring desires.

2. Though the special object of our love be our brother by the second Adam, yet the prohibition of hatred extends to our brother by the first Adam. We must not think that if we be kind to those of the Christian religion, we may exercise hostility towards Turks and Pagans. It is true, the Jews were enemies to the nations round about them, yea, did pursue them to an utter extirpation, but they had an express warrant from heaven for it; and therefore their practice is no pattern, till we can shew the like warrant. We cannot without breach at once, both of equity and charity, under any pretences whatsoever, invade the possessions or destroy the persons of the most barbarous savages. But yet still in this as in other sins, the quality of the object addeth to the quantity of the offence; and though it be a sin to hate any man, it is a greater sin to hate a Christian, and the more of Christianity there is in him, the more malignity there is in our hatred, since the better the object, the worse the act. And yet further, though it be an heinous sin to hate a Christian upon any account, yet to hate him because he is a Christian, or because he is a more exact and conscientious Christian than ourselves, is the highest degree of this hatred, and that which borders upon the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.

3. This hatred of our brother, which is here forbidden, is not only of him whilst he is our friend, but when he becometh our enemy. Indeed, it is an high aggravation of our hatred, when it is of one that loveth us, but it is no excusation when of one that hateth us. To hate a friend is inhuman, to hate an enemy is unchristian. Not only to retaliate good for evil,† but evil

for evil, is against St Paul's precept; and as well he that is second, as he that is first, in hating his brother is guilty. How consonant soever it may seem to corrupt reason, yet it is dissonant to true religion, for a man to pay another in his own coin, and return cursing for cursing. Nor is it enough for us not to offer an injury, but we must not so much as return it, not only *velle laedere*, a will to hurt, but *vindicare*, to revenge an hurt, yea, not only to will and endeavour a greater, but an equal, nay, a less wrong to my brother than he hath done to me, is to hate him.

4. It is not only hurting but hating our brother which is prohibited. Indeed, on the one hand, a man may hurt him whom he doth not hate, through mere casualty, and then it is no sin; or through carelessness, and then it is not so great a sin. Again, on the other hand, a man may hate his brother, and yet through want either of ability or opportunity not hurt him; nor is his sin therefore the less. Look as a rich man may relieve his brother, and yet not love him; and a poor man may love his brother, and yet not relieve him; so a charitable man may hurt his brother, and yet not hate him; and a malicious man may be said to hate his brother when he doth not hurt him. The outward execution is not a sin against charity, unless there be an inward intention, and the inward intention is a sin, though there be no outward execution. True it is, the further a sin proceeds, from thought to desire, desire to endeavour, endeavour to action, it is so much the worse; but still the very desire of injuring (though it be not accomplished) is a sin, and here called hating our brother.

5. Yet, lastly, whatever falleth short of the duty of loving, cometh within the compass of hating our brother. It is a moral axiom, *Omnis recessus à virtute est vitium*, whatever recedeth from virtue is a vice. It is true, in this particular every departure from love is a degree of hatred. The affections of love and hatred are like the qualities of heat and cold; and look as the ceasing of heat is by an accession of cold, so where there is a defect of love there is the infection of hatred. Hence it is that an unjust or unadvised anger with our brother is a degree of hating him; indeed, not all anger (for there is an anger of love as well as hatred), but when it is an anger, not of just reprehension, but vain contention, not with moderation, but excess, it is at least a disposition to hatred. Hence it is, that not only willing evil, but not willing good, to our brother, is an hating him. Look as, in point of equity, not dealing faithfully is cozening, so, in point of charity, not loving is hating. It is a vain fancy, yea, a lying deceit, with which some men please themselves in respect of an enemy: I do not hate him, and yet I do not love him; I will not do him any harm, but I will not do him any good. The one is as well a sin as the other; and when our apostle here opposeth hating to loving, he seemeth to intimate that if we do not love we hate our brother.

\* Pier. Hierog. lib. xxxi. cap. 7.

† Qu. 'evil for good'?—Ed.

And now, beloved, what great reason have all of us to reflect upon ourselves first, and next on the men among whom we live, sadly observing and bewailing the general prevalence of this sin of hatred amongst us.

To this end consider a few particulars :

1. Are there none who hate those most who are the best, to whom not only their brother but his religious conversation is hateful, therefore reviling, deriding, yea, persecuting him, because he maketh conscience of his ways? Such are those sons of Belial (men at once both profane and uncharitable), who, because they hate godliness, hate the professors and practisers of it. Whoever will [not] swear, and whore, and quaff, run to the same excess of riot with themselves, is in their account an hateful precisian; whosoever frequenteth God's house, observeth religious duties in his own house, taking all opportunities (according to his place and power) of instructing the ignorant, rebuking the obstinate, exhorting the negligent, is with them an abominable puritan.

True it is, there are many, too many, nor were they ever more than in this age, whose dissimulation and hypocrisy are manifest, who are very strict in the duties, and zealous against the sins, which respect the first table, and yet notoriously irregular in matters of the second table. These are they whose practices are bewailed and abhorred by all good Christians; and through the sides of these religion is wounded by profane atheists. Indeed, some ungodly wretches are apt to pretend, when by occasion of such pharisees they inveigh against the strict profession of Christianity, that it is not religion but dissimulation, piety but hypocrisy, which they oppugn; but I shall only desire them to consider whether they be not thus invective against all that are zealous, as if they were hypocrites, though they knew nothing by them; whether it be not the very exercises of religion, their reading, praying, hearing, and the like, which they detest, since else why do they not imitate those good duties themselves, as well as abhor the hypocrisy which they lay upon those who perform them; and yet once more, whether to hear of or know any gross sin by one who is careful of these duties be not an object rather of their joy than sorrow, as being glad when they can pick an hole in the coat of a professor? And surely if their consciences accuse them as guilty in answer to these queries, whatever they may account themselves, they will be found haters, yea, the worst sort of haters, because of the best sort of brothers.

2. Are there none who are so ungrateful as to repay courtesy with injury, love with hatred; who, instead of loving those that hate them, hate those that love them? Thus Jehoram sought to slay Elisha, who had been friendly to him; Saul intended ruin to David, who had been faithful to him; and the Jews crucified Christ, who came to save them. It is St Austin's complaint,\* Alas, no wonder if we cannot persuade you to love

\* Aug. in loc.

your enemies, when you hate your brethren! Certainly they are far from Christian love who are guilty of such unnatural hatred.

3. Again, how many are there whose hatred (as Solomon expresseth it) is 'covered with deceit,' who have sharp teeth with soft gums, who (like the panther which with sweet breath allureth other creatures to him, and then devoureth them)\* 'speak fair, whilst seven abominations are in their heart;' and surely as divinity reckoneth the first sort, so morality these among the worst sort of haters, since a false friend is more pernicious than an open enemy, and *ex magno appetitu sic mutat modum loquendi*, it is the greatness of hatred which puts him upon this pretence of love.

4. Yet again, are there not some whose hatred is so deadly to their brother that they will be content to do themselves a loss, so they may do him a great injury? That apologue of *Cupidus* and *Invidus*, the covetous and the envious man, is very observable to this purpose. Jupiter promised that whatsoever the one asked, the other should have double; whereupon they much strove one with the other who should ask first. The covetous man refused, because he was desirous of the double portion; and the envious man was no less unwilling, as repining that the other should have more than himself. At length the envious man resolveth to be the first in asking; but what did he ask? That Jupiter would put out one of his eyes, because he then knew the other must lose both! Such malicious men there are, and that among Christians, who care not to deprive themselves, if they may disappoint their brother. This is that hatred which is fetched from hell. Witness Dives, who desireth not that he might come to Lazarus, but that Lazarus might come to him, Luke xvi., as if he had rather Lazarus should be miserable with him, than he happy with Lazarus.

But if there be (as I hope there are) many who can acquit themselves from these effects of hatred at the height, yet I fear we may observe those symptoms in the most which discover them to be somewhat sick of this disease. When the eye is evil because God is good, doth it not discover that besides the black which nature hath put in the eye as the seat of its perfection, there is another black which envy hath put into it as a seat of corruption? What doth the smoke of detraction, slander, calumny, cursing, railing, scoffing, backbiting, which cometh forth at the lips of many men, but argue a fire of malice burning in their hearts? Whence cometh betraying, quarreling, fighting, plundering, yea, killing one another, but from this lust of hatred in men's minds? Indeed, who can consider the hateful practices which are continually acted among us, and not acknowledge the great predominancy of this sin? 'Drop down, ye heavens, and let the skies pour down righteousness,' saith the prophet, Isa. xlv. 8. Drop down, ye heavens, and let the skies pour down charity and love, may we say; for it hath left the

\* Æl. lib. v. cap. xl.



earth; yea, instead thereof the smoke of hatred ascending out of the bottomless pit hath filled it. What calling or profession of men is free from this vice? I would to God the black coat were not besmeared with it. What state and condition of men is not guilty of it? Oppressors plainly tread in the footsteps of hatred, and I would to God sufferers did not harbour the lust of revenge.

How needful, then, is a dehortation to dissuade you from this sin; and, indeed this very name *brother*, if it be (as you have already heard) an argument of love, may well be a dissuasive from hatred. If he be a brother

in the highest notion, he is Christ's brother as well as thine; and wilt thou hate him whom Christ loveth? If in the lowest degree, he is flesh of thy flesh, and wilt thou 'hide thine eyes' (in contempt and hatred) 'from thine own flesh?' St Paul saith, 'No man ever yet hated his own flesh;' and wilt thou be so unreasonable? But if this consideration be too weak, go on and view the description which followeth of the state of such a sinner; and that is the next general, which, God willing, the next time shall be set before your eyes, that if possible this sin of hatred may be eradicated out of your hearts.

### SERMON XXXII.

*He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.—*  
1 JOHN II. 9-11.

AMONG the manifold excellencies of God's law, this is not the least, that it is, according to St Paul's phrase, Rom. vii., a spiritual law, and that not only *effectivè*, because dictated by God's Spirit, but *objectivè*, because extending to man's spirit. Indeed, it is one of the differences between human and divine precepts, that those only reach the outward, these the inward man; those only order the conversation, these our cogitations; finally, those take hold of words and works, these of thoughts and desires.

This is evident in matters of religion towards God. Man requireth the external observance, but God internal devotion. Man forbiddeth profane oaths, but God blasphemous imaginations; nor is it less true in regard of our duty towards man. Human commands inhibit the gross acts of uncleanness, but divine, lustful affections; and to instance in no more, whereas only actual injuries of our brother come within the compass of man's cognisance, God prohibits the very hatred, and enjoineth the contrary affection of love to him, as here we see in the words, 'He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother,' &c.

Having discussed the first general part of the opposition, namely, the sin briefly specified, 'He that hateth his brother,' we are now to go on to the other, which is the state of the sinner, as it is largely described in the 9th and 11th verses.

1. That which first occurreth in this description is the sinner's own imagination, what he fancieth himself to be. He saith he is in the light. What is meant by this phrase of 'being in the light' needs not again to be insisted on. It is as much as to say he is in Christ, he savingly knoweth Christ, or he is in a state of grace; this is that which he that hateth his brother may say. Indeed, this cannot be in truth, for St John saith of him, 'he is in darkness,' and to be at once in the light and in the darkness is impossible; but

yet he may say so, though it be not so, and that two ways, namely, in opinion and profession.

(1.) He that hateth his brother may think himself to be in the light, and so say it in his heart, for,

[1.] He may be acquainted in a great measure with the mysteries of Christian religion, and much conversant in divine speculations, and for this reason imagine himself in the light. The Pharisees, though a generation of vipers for their venomous nature, say it of themselves, 'we see;' and no doubt as to the letter of Moses his law did see and know much. So may hypocritical malicious Christians be versed in the theory of Christianity.

[2.] He may be frequent in religious performances, and upon this account fancy himself to be in the light. Those Israelites whose 'hands were full of blood,' Isa. i. 15, and therefore their hearts full of malice, made many prayers, and offered multitudes of sacrifices. Those Gnostics in the primitive times are characterised by St Paul to be *ἀφιλόλαδοι*, 'despisers of those that do good,' 2 Tim. iii. 3, and so void of Christian love, nay, *ἄστοργοι*, 'without natural affection,' to wit, towards their fleshly relations; to be *ἀνήμεροι*, fierce and cruel in their attempts, yea, *διάβολοι*, very devils for the malice of their tongues; and notwithstanding they were such as had a form of godliness, in regard of external observances, and so no doubt thought themselves in the light.

[3.] He may mistake his hatred of his brother for zeal, his furious persecution for a just prosecution; and no wonder, if he think in this respect his very hatred to be an argument of his being in the light. When those wicked Jews hate and pursue Christ even to the death, they plead blasphemy as the cause, and so justify the fact. When Saul 'breathed forth threatenings,' and 'made that havoc of the church,' he saith of himself, that it was in his opinion an act

of zeal: 'concerning zeal, persecuting the church,' Phil. iii. 2. Our blessed Saviour acquainted his disciples, John xiii. 2, 'that whosoever did kill them should think he did God good service;' and when men do *insanire cum ratione*, nay, *religione*, rage against their brother, not only out of rational but religious principles (to wit, in their apprehensions), no wonder if their rage grow very high, and notwithstanding their opinions of themselves be very good.

(2.) And surely this being his opinion, no marvel if it be his profession wherein he glorieth, whereof he boasteth, saying it to others, that he is in the light. Indeed, some there are who say this in profession contrary to their own opinion; their consciences tell them they are in the darkness of wickedness, and yet they say they are in the light of grace; and why this, but that, hating their brother, they may with the more certainty and secrecy accomplish their malicious designs against him?

But though (I hope) the number of these is very small, yet many, very many, there are who, whilst themselves are black with hatred, glitter in shows of holiness, and make great brags of their sanctity; *facta sanctitas oculos omnium perstringit, interim neglecta jacet charitas*, saith Calvin upon this text, their fancied piety is glorious in the eyes of all, whilst charity lieth neglected. We shall do no wrong either to the papists on the one hand, or anabaptists on the other, if we assert them to be haters of their brethren; the bloody practices of both do loudly cry it in the ears of God and man; and yet many of these think, all of them boast, themselves to be in the light of sanctity, and that they are the churches of Christ.

You have heard what this hater of his brother saith; be pleased now to hear what he is, as his state is really and faithfully delineated by our apostle in three characters. And yet, before I enter upon the particulars, it will not be amiss to take notice in general, how contrary the apostle's description is to this hypocrite's opinion. He 'saith he is in the light.' The apostle saith, 'he is in and walketh in darkness;' whereby it appeareth that his opinion is very false, because contrary to the judgment of truth. And hence the Greek scholiast\* here supplieth *ψευδεται*, and St Cyprian† *mentitur*, he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, lieth; whence it is easy to observe,

That the estate of a man may be desperately bad, when yet in his own opinion it is excellently good. A man may account himself silver, whilst God rejects him as dross; he may in his own opinion be a member of Christ, and yet in Christ's esteem a child of the devil; and whilst he dreameth that he is in the book of life, he may be in God's account a reprobate. Weak Christians, erring on the right hand, condemn themselves as if they were in the darkness of unregeneracy, when yet God seeth the light of his grace shining in them. Presumptuous hypocrites, on the

\* Genmen. in loc.

† Cypr. adv. Jud.

other, applaud themselves as if they were in the light of grace, when yet God seeth them in the darkness of unregeneracy.

The pharisee justifieth himself and condemneth the publican, Christ justifieth the publican and condemneth the pharisee. Men may be good in the estimation of other, yea, and that of good men, whilst in truth they are bad. So the angel of the church of Sardis had 'a name that he lived, and was dead,' Rev. iii. 2, 15. Men may be saints in their own apprehensions, and yet devils in God's sight. So the angel of the church of Laodicea said, he was 'rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing, whenas he was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Take we heed how we give credit, either to the fair applauses of men, or the smooth dictates of our own hearts, which, being deceitful, soothe us up as if we were in the light, when yet we are and walk in darkness.

This being premised, come we to a particular view of the several characters given to him that hateth a brother, by which three things are represented to us:

His wicked disposition: 'he is in darkness even till now;' and again, 'he is in darkness.'

His vicious conversation, and 'walketh in darkness.'

His miserable condition, and 'knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.'

I. That which first occurreth is his wicked disposition, wherein we have two things considerable. The quality, 'he is in darkness,' and the duration, 'even until now.'

1. The quality of his disposition is described by that ingeminated expression, 'He is in darkness:' for the fuller handling of which, take notice first of the emphasis, and then of the meaning of the phrase.

(1.) The emphasis of the phrase is double:

[1.] It is observable that our apostle doth not content himself to say, 'he is not in the light,' but, as Zanchy well observeth, *exaggerationis gratia*, useth an exaggerated expression, 'he is in darkness.' Indeed, the one doth necessarily infer the other, he that is not in the light must needs be in darkness, since the removal of the light is the position of darkness. and as the one goeth the other cometh; but yet this latter is more full, and the apostle, that he might let us see how grossly such a man is deceived, let us know that he is so far from being in the light, that he is in darkness, and therefore he is as much mistaken as if a man in a dark night should say it were noonday.

[2.] It would yet further be considered, that it is not only said of such a man, 'darkness is in him,' but 'he is in darkness.' Even he that loveth his brother is not so in the light but that there is a mixture of darkness; but he that hateth his brother is in darkness,\* and so without any light. A man is then said to be in the water when he is covered over with, and so as it

\* Beza in Rom. viii. 3.



were under the power of it. So that the phrase of being in darkness is as much as being under the power and dominion of darkness, according to that phrase of St Paul, Col. i. 11, where he saith, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.'

(2.) And now the meaning of the phrase, if we consider what is already asserted to be intended by light, appeareth in plain terms to be this, he that hateth his brother is in a state of sin, under the dominion of iniquity, a slave of Satan, or in one word, an unregenerate man.

To this purpose it is that St Paul, speaking of himself and the rest of the Christians before their conversion, Titus iii. 2, reckoneth up this as one of the black marks of that estate, 'hateful and hating one another;' and among those many brands by which he characteriseth the wicked Gentiles, Rom. i. 29, this is one, that they were 'full of all maliciousness,' which afterwards he calls 'malignity,' the malicious man being the true malignant, and so deservedly accounted a wicked man.

Indeed, this is such a sin, as rendereth him in whom it reigneth, not only less than a Christian, but worse than a man. What St Basil saith concerning anger,\* is doubtless much more true of hatred, ἀπόθνησθαι πατερῆος τον ἀνθρώπου, it maketh a man to degenerate into a wild beast; and therefore such sinners are compared in Scripture to tigers, dragons, lions, wolves, and such like ravenous creatures; nay, indeed, as Mark the hermit † observeth, they are, τῶν θηρίων ἀγριώτεροι καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων ἀλογώτεροι, more brutish than brutes, and unreasonable than those unreasonable creatures; for whereas wolves devour sheep, but not wolves, yea, for the most part, beasts of the same kind, in their way, converse lovingly together, he that hateth his brother hateth one of the same kind and nature with himself. Nay, to carry it one step lower, it denominateth them not only beasts but devils, yea, which is strange, worse than devils; and that upon this very account, since, as Alexander Alensis hath observed, ‡ though a devil hateth a man, yet not a devil. Satan is not divided against Satan, whereas man hateth man. Well might our apostle say of such a person, he is in darkness.

This is that which would be so much the rather considered, because so many judge of themselves and others by a partial rule, if they themselves be free, or they observe others to be free, from those sensual sins of drunkenness, uncleanness, vain swearing, and the like, they presently infer that such persons are in a good condition, whilst yet in the mean time pride, lying, covetousness, malice, and all uncharitableness, have dominion over them, whereas, in truth, these are no less works of darkness than those; and therefore St Paul, Rom. xiii. 13, reckoneth 'strife and envy,' as well as 'chambering and wantonness, rioting and

drunkenness,' among the number. He that startleth at an oath, and yet belcheth forth lies, that abhorreth a Delilah, and yet maketh gold his darling; he that will not be drunk with liquor, and yet is drunk with hatred, is nevertheless a wicked, unregenerate person. The sum is, swearing, intemperate, unclean Christians, are swine; and lying, covetous, malicious Christians, are dogs. Far be it from me to justify the former, nor will I the latter; those are evil, and these are not good, for 'he that hateth his brother is in darkness.'

2. The duration of this disposition is that which cometh next to be inquired into, in these words, *even until now*, that is, *sicut semper fuit sic est adhuc*, so Zanchy,\* as he was, so he is still; he remaineth in darkness, *etiam sub Christianismo*, so Aretius, † notwithstanding he liveth in the sunshine of Christianity.

And there is a threefold reason may be given for which our apostle might annex this clause:

(1.) By way of prevention, to take off that plea which some would be apt to make against his accusation. Dost thou say, O holy apostle, that we are in darkness? We have heard thyself and others preaching Jesus Christ, we believe in his name, embrace his doctrine, and is it possible we should be in darkness? Yes, saith our apostle, 'he that hateth his brother is in darkness until now;' not only while he was an heathen, but now he pretends to be a Christian, he is still in darkness. 'Though I have all knowledge and faith, yet if I have not charity,' saith St Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 'I am nothing,' to wit, *in esse gratia*. ‡ I have no being in Christ, I am nobody in God's esteem. Thus is it possible for a man to be in the light, and yet to be in darkness, to enjoy the light of the gospel, and yet remain in the darkness of sin. Oh then, boast not of, nor rest in, external privileges; think not to say, We have the ordinances of Christ, we profess the name of Christ; we may for all this be as destitute of true Christianity as the very pagan.

(2.) By way of aggravation, to render such an one so much the more inexcusable. He is in darkness until now; that is, though he have enjoyed the means of being in the light, yet he remaineth in darkness. Indeed, though these two be not inconsistent, yet they are very incongruous. That a man in the night-time should be in darkness is no wonder, but to be in the dark when the sun is risen and shineth forth, is strange and sad; yea, and certainly it were far better never to have the light, than, having it, to abide in darkness. Upon this account it is that our blessed Saviour denounceth so severe a woe against Capernaum, Mat. x. 15, and assureth her it should be 'more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment' than for her. In very deed, a Christian hating his brother is far more vile and abominable than an injurious heathen; and by how much his profession is the better, by so much his sin is the worse, and his state the more wicked.

\* Bas. de ira, hom. x.  
† Marc. Erem. in B. P.

‡ Al. Al. de Invid.

\* Zanch. in loc.

† Aret. ibid.

‡ Aquin. ibid.

(3.) By way of dehortation from any longer continuance in this sinful state. 'He is in darkness till now,' and surely it is long enough, nay, too long, to have been so till now. *Saltem nunc sapiat*, saith Danæus;\* let him at length learn to be wise, and no longer continue in this estate; so that our apostle here saith implicitly what St Paul saith expressly, Rom. xiii. 11, 'And that, knowing the time, it is high time to awake out of sleep.' Now that the gospel is published, Christ is preached; it is high time to come out of this darkness. And as St Peter bespeaketh those to whom he wrote, 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life it may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,' so St John seemeth to say to these malicious Christians, For the time past, whilst yet you were in heathenism, it may suffice you to have been in darkness; will you continue in it still? It is enough, nay, too much, that though the evangelical light hath shone upon you, you have been in darkness till now; let it be so no longer, break off your sins by righteousness, your hatred by charity, your malice by love, else your state is as bad still as ever it was; nay, far worse than it was in those times, when you heard not of Christ at all. So much for the first character; pass we on from his sinful disposition to

II. His vicious conversation, in those words, *and walketh in darkness*. The full latitude of this clause will appear in a twofold parallel.

1. Walking in darkness is a going on in the dark, and so intimateth a persisting in evil. This is the property of a malicious man, to be obstinate in his wickedness. Anger is oftentimes sudden and short, but hatred is settled and confirmed; a passion, saith St Basil,† *ἰατρῆσαν ὡς ὑποδεχόμενος*, such as will not admit of a cure. Hence it is, that he who is possessed with this sin is seldom reclaimed from it, especially being one who maketh profession of Christianity, and saith he is in the light; for, as Solomon saith, 'there is more hope of a fool, than of him that is wise in his own conceit;' so there is, doubtless, more hopes of him that is an open profane sinner, hating his brother, than of him that saith he is in the light, and yet hateth him: for whereas the one may probably be brought to acknowledge that he walketh in darkness, and so be persuaded to return out of it, the other, supposing himself always in the light, is deaf to all admonitions, and so walketh on in darkness. St Austin, pursuing this metaphor in reference to all sorts of sinners, saith elegantly,‡ *Cum peccant, tenebræ sunt; cum insuper non confitentur peccata, sed ea defendunt, tenebræ tenebras suas*; when men sin, they are in the dark; but when they will not confess, but defend their sins, they darken their darkness. Thus is it with this sort of sinners, every one that hateth his brother is in darkness, but he that, hating his brother, saith he is in the light, and so, instead of condemning, justifieth himself,

\* Dan. in loc.

† Aug. in Ps. xiii. 8.

‡ Bas. de irâ.

both is and walketh on (to wit, obstinately) in darkness.

2. Men who walk in darkness, wander and stumble and fall almost every step they take; so do malicious men stumble and fall into manifold sins, and wander into several by-paths of iniquity. That this is here intended appeareth by the opposition, for, as where it is said in the preceding verse of him that loveth his brother, 'there is none occasion of stumbling in him,' it implieth not only that he abideth, but he walketh in the light; so here, when it is said of the man who hates his brother, that he walketh in darkness, it implieth he frequently stumbleth at everything. Solomon, Prov. iv. 19, saith of wicked men in general, 'their way is as darkness,' not only *dark* in the concrete, but *darkness* in the abstract; nor only that they walk in the dark, but their very way is darkness. It is true of him that hateth his brother in particular, every step he taketh is darkness, some sin or other. It is not unworthy our observation, that a troop of sins attend upon hatred in St Paul's enumeration, Gal. v. 22, 'variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, and heresies,' all the cursed brats of this mother. To this purpose it is that Cyprian saith of this sin,\* it is a seed of mischief, seminary of vice, and the matter of much evil; it swelleth with pride, embittereth with rage, prevaricath by perfidiousness, burneth with anger, and foameth through impatience. Hence avarice and ambition, whereby we desire to equal, or rather exceed, him whom we hate, in wealth and power. Hence it is that the fear of God is contemned, the commands of Christ are neglected, truth is adulterated, unity divided, heresies and schisms fomented, yea, all manner of wickedness committed; yea, to carry it a little further, hence it is not only that he falleth into many sins, but stumbleth in his best actions, and those religious services which sometimes he performeth find no acceptance. It is observed in the Levitical law, that, among other fowls, the hawk, which is the delight of princes, fed with cost, and kept with care, is forbidden in sacrifice, Lev. xi. 16; and why, but because it is of a rapacious vindictive nature. Almighty God tells the Israelites he will not hear their prayers; yea, his soul bated their assemblies; and why, but because their hands were full of blood, Isa. i. 15. Christ adviseth him who 'brings a gift to the altar, to go first and be reconciled to his brother, whom he hath offended,' Mat. v. 23, doubtless, thereby to teach us that in this sense the gifts of those who live in enmity are *δωρὰ ἀδόξα*, such as God will not accept.

By all this, it appeareth how sinful the life of such a person is, all his actions being no better than works, and his ways paths, of darkness; and oh that the sinfulness of this sin might so much the more exasperate us against it. The name of this devil may well be Legion: let us then be careful to cast him out.

\* Cyp. de zelo et livore.



Indeed, the saying of Valens is, in some respect, true concerning anger, *Alienus ab irâ, alienus à justitiâ*, he that knoweth not how to be angry will not care to be just; but in regard of hatred, it is far otherwise, and we may say, *Qui non alienus ab odio, alienus à justitiâ*, he that is a friend to hatred must needs be a stranger to justice. Oh, let us conceive a pious hatred against this impious and injurious hatred, which whosoever exerciseth towards his brother must needs walk in darkness.

III. The last character of this sinner yet remaineth, to wit, his miserable condition, which is

Propounded in those words, 'And knoweth not whither he goeth;'

Proved in those, 'Because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.'

1. The misery of him that hateth his brother is asserted, though briefly, yet fully, in those words, 'He knoweth not whither he goeth.' It is a clause which sets forth the sad condition of this sinner, both directly and collaterally.

(1.) Directly. This is verified of every wicked man, and in particular of him that hateth his brother; he knoweth not whither he goeth, and, indeed, it necessarily followeth upon the former, since he that walketh in darkness cannot know whither he goeth. This is true, as Zanchy hath well observed\* in a double reference, *ad riam*, and *ad terminum*, to the way and the term of his walk; he knoweth not *where* nor *whither*, neither the badness of the path, nor the sadness of the end. The former Solomon affirmeth of all wicked men, when he saith, Prov. iv. 19, 'Their way is as darkness, and they know not at what they stumble; the latter of the man who is invited by an harlot, chap. ix. 18, 'He knoweth not that the dead are there, and her guests are in the depth of hell.'

But it may be objected, that the person of whom the apostle here speaketh is one who is in profession a Christian, for he saith he is in the light, and no doubt is so far in the light, as that he cannot but see and know that hatred of the brethren is a deadly sin, and that whilst he continueth in it he goeth down to hell. How then is it said of him that he knoweth not whither he goeth?

To answer this briefly. It is one thing to *know*, that is, to *apprehend*; and another to *know*, that is, to *consider* a thing. Indeed, it is impossible but that such an one should know; and yet, as God saith of Israel in another case, Isa. i. 3, 'Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider,' so may it be said of this person, he doth not know, that is, he doth not consider whither he goeth. To this purpose is Carthusian's note, *Quantam damnationem meretur non pensat*, He doth not lay to heart what damnation he deserveth, † what a danger he incurreth.

\* Zanch. in loc.

† Non attendit tristem exitum.—*Illyr. in loc. Carthus. ibid.*

His judgment dictateth to him *in these*, in general, that hatred is a sin, and leadeth to hell; but when it is to pass sentence *in hypothesis*, in particular, it either denieth the action which is done against his brother to proceed from hatred; or that though it be a sin, yet it shall not prove deadly to him, because he is in Christ already, or because he intends to repent of it before he dieth; or else his judgment not at all taking notice of the obliquity of the work and misery of the wages, dictateth what the will is about to do, as expedient for the present satisfaction of that which it intendeth. Suitable herennto is that note of Estius upon my text,\* that no sin is committed but through a previous error of the practical judgment about that particular object which the will chooseth. Therefore doth the malicious, yea, every wicked man, commit and persist in his sin, because he doth not weigh his actions in the balance of right reason, nor duly ponder either what he doth or whither he tendeth.

I cannot let this go without this useful inference: Sinners, consider seriously what you do, and think sadly whither you go, whilst you go on in your sins. *Respice finem*, Look to the end, is a lesson which whosoever learneth not will in the end prove a fool. No better way to deal by this serpent, sin, than (as God commanded Moses in another case) to take it by the tail. The verb † beginning of repentance is at St Peter's question, 1 Pet. iv. 17, *τί τὸ τέλος*, 'What is the end' of a wicked course?

(2.) But further, this phrase, *not knowing whither he goeth*, sets forth the miserable estate of this sinner collaterally, and by way of allusion. For,

[1.] He that knoweth not whither he goeth is in an unquiet, restless state, full of fears and cares, and his mind is never at quiet. A fit emblem of a wicked man, whose name in Hebrew, *עָרָב*, signifieth one that is unquiet, and whom the prophet compareth to the troubled sea, Isa. lvii. 20. And especially is this true of the malicious hater, who always carrieth about him that which tortureth him. Indeed, what is envy and hatred to the soul, but (to use St Basil's comparison) as the fretting rust to the iron, and the consuming moth to the garment? Nay (to borrow Socrates his resemblance§), what is it but as a saw continually cutting? or (to allude to that of our Saviour) a worm still gnawing? In one word, to speak in the poet's language,

Ut Etna seipsum,  
Sic se, non alios, invidus igno coquit; ||

like to the mountain of Etna, the envious man hath a fire always burning within his breast, and so is never at ease. Upon this account it is that Gregory Nazianzen saith of this sin, that it is both *ἀδικία* and *δικαίωμα*, most unjust to him that is hated, and

\* Est. in loc.

† Qu. 'very'?—Ed.

‡ Bas. hom 12.

§ Socrat in Diog. Laert.

|| Ovid. Metam.

most just to him that hateth, in that disquietment with which it perplexeth him.

[2.] He that knoweth not whither he goeth is usually deceived in his opinion; when he thinketh he is walking eastward, he walketh westward, and whilst he imagineth himself going forward he is going backward. Thus he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is deceived; for whereas he supposeth himself in the way to heaven, he is posting on to hell. And truly in this respect he is so much the more miserable, because he bringeth himself into a fool's paradise, and dreameth that he shall be happy.

[3.] Lastly, he that knoweth not whither he goeth cannot see to avoid, and so oftentimes suddenly falleth into bogs, pits, waters, by which he is destroyed and perisheth. Such is the case of wicked, especially malicious men: they bring upon themselves swift and sudden destruction; and, which is very considerable, whilst they plot the ruin of others, they accelerate their own, and the very mischief which they design for their brethren falls upon their own heads. And now, putting all this together, tell me if he whose troubles are so distracting, hopes deceiving, and dangers destroying, be not a miserable man.

2. The proposition is despatched, He knoweth not whither he goeth. The proof followeth, 'Because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.' And now our apostle carrieth on the allegory to the utmost, therefore he that is in darkness, and walketh in it, cannot know whither he goeth, because he cannot see his way; and therefore he cannot see his way, because by reason of the darkness his eyes are blinded. For the better opening of this clause, I shall very briefly consider these particulars.

The part affected, *his eyes*. The disease, *blinded*. The cause, *darkness*.

(1.) His eyes, that is the part affected; by which, no doubt, is to be understood the understanding. The eye, in its proper notion, is a part of the body; but metaphorically the soul hath its eyes as well as the body. It is Olympiodorus his note,\* the members of the outward man are equivocally attributed to the inward. As the excellencies of the greater world are after an higher manner in the less, so the parts of the body are after a more noble way in the soul. What the feet are in the one, the affections are in the other; what the stomach is in that, the memory is in this; what the heart is in the one, the will is in the other. Finally, what the eye is in that, the understanding is in this. We need no better expositor than St Paul, who unfolds the meaning of this metaphor when he saith, Eph. i. 18, 'The eyes of the understanding.'

If you inquire after the analogies, they are both apt and obvious, which I shall only mention.

[1.] The eye is situate in the upper part of the body, the head, and in the upper part of the head; so

\* Olympiod. in Eccles.

is the understanding a faculty of the superior soul, the rational, and the superior faculty in the rational soul.

[2.] The eye is the chiefest of the senses, and the understanding is the choicest among the faculties, without which the will would be but a brutish appetite.

[3.] The use of the eye is to see things visible; ὕψθαλαμος, say the Greek etymologists, is quasi ὀπίς θαλαμῶς, the chamber of vision. The understanding is that whereby we know and apprehend things intelligible; it is, as it were, the soul's window, whereby it receiveth the light of knowledge.

[4.] Finally, the office of the eye is to guide the motion of the body, to direct our hands in working, and our feet in walking. Such is the office of the understanding, to order the will and affections in their inclinations and aversations, to teach us what to choose and what to refuse, what to love and what to hate. You see how fitly the understanding of the mind is compared to the eyes of the body.

(2.) The disease of this part here specified is blindness, the worst evil that can befall the eye, as rendering it altogether useless, and the state of the person dangerous. A dim eye may do some service, by preventing many falls; but a blind eye exposeth to continual hazards. Well saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. vi. 23, 'If the light' (meaning the eye) 'that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!' Yet this is the state of every wicked, malicious man especially; his eyes are blinded, his understanding darkened, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know. Indeed, his left eye is quick-sighted, but his right eye is stark blind; he is 'wise to do evil,' but 'to do good he hath no knowledge,' Jer. iv. 22.

Quantum mortalia pectora cæcæ  
Noctis habent?

saith the poet,\* How dark a night of ignorance overshadoweth the minds of mortals? It is not seldom that this name of fool is given in Scripture to an evil man; and not without cause, since he is altogether destitute of right reason. The prodigal, repenting, is said to 'come to himself;' whereby is intimated, that whilst wandering he was besides himself. Thus is the sinner a fool, a mad man, a blind man, ignorant of the things which concern his everlasting peace.

And surely if blindness of the bodily eye be sad, this of the spiritual is far more doleful. Our bodily eye is common to us with beasts; our intellectual, that whereby we partake with angels; and by how much the eye of the mind is better than that of the body, by so much the blindness of this is worse. The body's eye may be better spared than the soul's; yea, the want of corporal sight may be a means of spiritual good, but the want of spiritual sight can be no way helpful, but altogether hurtful; yea, which is so much the more sad, whereas the bodily blind feeleth and ac-

\* Ovid.



knowledgeth his want of light, the spiritually blind man thinketh that none hath clearer eyes than himself. Thus Christ saith of the Laodicean angel, Rev. iii. 17, He knew not that he was blind. And this sinner in the text saith he is in the light, *suam ignorans ignorantiam*, not knowing his want of knowledge. Oh learn we to be sensible of, and affected with, the misery of this condition, to have our eyes blinded.

(3.) But lastly, the cause of this pernicious disease would be searched into, which we shall find to arise principally from ourselves. It is true, St Paul saith, 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'The God of this world' (who is the prince of darkness) 'blinds men's eyes;' but chiefly it is the darkness of wickedness within us that bringeth this evil upon us. Wickedness (saith the wise man\*) doth alter the understanding, and the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest. To which agreeth that of St Chrysostom,† Sin doth so blind the senses of the sinners, that, seeing not the ways of falsehood, they thrust themselves headlong therein. The truth is, as the serpent first wrought upon the woman, and by her upon the man, so wickedness first worketh upon the affections, and by that upon the understanding. Nor is it any wonder that when those are perverted, this is blinded. Who can see anything in a troubled muddy water? No more can the understanding discern aright when the affections are stirred and mudded. What mists and fogs are to the air, darkening it, corrupt unruely passions are to the mind, blinding it. It were easy to instance in the several sorts of those which the schools call deadly sins, how, raising a commotion in the affections, they obnubilate the judgment. Oleot, upon this account, compareth the luxurious man to blind Samson, the gluttonous man to him that was born blind, the slothful man to blind Tobias, the covetous to the blind beggars, the angry to blind Lamech, the envious to blind Eli, and the proud man to Seneca's blind servant, who would not believe that she was blind, but the house dark. Certain it is, all of these seating themselves

\* Wisd. iv. 11.

† Chrysost. in Mat. vii. hom. 19.

in some one or other of our passions, do not only reign in our mortal bodies, but domineer in our immortal souls, misleading its most noble faculty the judgment. Oh what a slave is the mind of a covetous, luxurious, malicious man to his affections; it must think, and plot, and dictate, and judge according as they please. Well might our apostle say of him that hateth his brother, the darkness blindeth his eyes.

Nor would it be passed by, how the bad effect of this spiritual darkness exceeds that of natural in this respect; for whereas the eye of a man may be as good, as strong, as clear in the dark as in the light, only the darkness hinders the exercise of the sight, the malicious man by reason of his darkness hath the very sight of his understanding vitiated. Indeed, whereas in naturals the sight is not blinded, but the medium is darkened; in spirituals the medium, which is God's word, is not at all darkened, but the organ is blinded, whilst the deprivation of the passion is the deprivation of the understanding. As therefore we desire to have our minds savingly enlightened, endeavour we to have our lusts truly mortified; if we would have our judgments even and upright, let us not suffer them to be biassed by any passion.

To end all, what should this description of a wicked, malicious sinner's misery, but serve as a dissuasive from this iniquity! Let no violence be found in our hands, nor hatred in our hearts, especially considering that we say we are in the light, *ὡς ἐπὶς ἀγνῶδιον*, saith one of the ancients, it is unbecoming those who sing the songs of Zion to bark in rage; who are God's servants, to be slaves to envious lusts. I cannot expostulate better than in the words of St Cyprian,\* *Si homo lucis esse capisti, quid in zeli tenebras ruis*, If thou art a child of light, east off, as all, so especially this work of darkness, walk no longer in this way of darkness, in which if thou persist, whatever thy deceitful heart may prompt thee, it will inevitably lead thee to utter darkness, from which, good Lord, deliver us. Amen.

\* Cypr. de zelo et livore.

### SERMON XXXIII.

*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.—*  
1 JOHN II. 12-14.

**A**MONG the many similitudes by which the office of a minister is represented in Scripture, those two, of a watchman and a shepherd, are very observable. Indeed, both of them are metaphors, by which God himself is pleased to describe his prophets: the one, when he saith to Ezekiel, chap. xxxiii. 7, 'Son of

man, I have set thee a watchman to the house of Israel;' the other, in that gracious promise to his people, Jer. xxiii. 4, 'I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them.' The duty of a watchman is first to *take*, and then *give*, notice of the enemy's approach; and it is no small part of our

ministerial employment to warn the people of those dangers with which their spiritual enemies endeavour to surprise them. The work of a shepherd is to provide green pastures, still waters for the flock, and to take care not only for the grown sheep, but the tender lambs; and it is the chief task of a spiritual pastor to feed his people with knowledge and understanding, having regard to all persons, conditions, and ages. How fitly both these agree to this holy apostle St John, is easy to observe in this epistle; like a vigilant watchman, he warneth them in the latter part of this, and the beginning of the fourth chapter, of thoseimps of Satan, antichristian heretics, which did infest and infect the church. Like a careful shepherd, he giveth them wholesome instructions for the stablishing of their faith, regulating their life, in the greater part of the epistle; and here, in these verses which I have read, he manifesteth the care he had not only of the elder, but younger Christians, 'I write to you little children,' &c.

In these three verses we have an answer to three questions, *Quid? Quibus? Quare?*

*What* St John did? To which the answer is returned in the word *write*.

*To whom* he wrote? The answer to which is given in the several titles.

*Why* he wrote to all and each of these? The answer whereunto is in those various clauses which have a *because* prefixed.

So that, if you please, here are three general parts in this portion of holy writ to be discussed.

The *persons* characterised: 'little children,' 'fathers,' 'young men,' 'little children.'

The *act* performed, 'I write,' 'I have written.'

The *reasons annexed*, 'Because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake,' 'because you have known him that is from the beginning,' &c.

According to this proposed method, I am to begin at the middle of the verses, with the several compellations by which our apostle bespeaketh those to whom he wrote. These I find in the usual Greek copies to be four, *τεκνία, πατέρες, νεανίσκοι, παῖδια*, but in our translation three, 'little children,' 'fathers,' 'young men.' St Austin upon this place\* seemeth to insinuate that these titles are given by St John generally to all Christians to whom he wrote, *Filii sunt, patres sunt, juvenes sunt: in filiis natiuitas, in patribus antiquitas, in juvenibus fortitudo*, all believers are children in respect of their new birth, fathers in regard of their knowledge of the Ancient of days, and young men in respect of their spiritual strength. To this agreeth that of Justinian,† who saith that therefore our apostle describeth all Christians by these names, because he requireth the qualities of little children, fathers, and young men, in all Christians; but this

interpretation, though pious, seemeth not so congruous, it being improbable he should severally inculcate his writing, together with the several reasons of his writing to them, had he intended only Christians in general by all these compellations.

The generality of interpreters most probably conceive these titles to have several references, but yet with some difference, which ariseth from a double consideration of the first title, *τεκνία*, 'little children,' in the twelfth verse.

1. Some conceive it to be of a particular concernment, and so to note a distinct sort of persons from fathers and young men. That which favours this interpretation is, 1. That hereby every one of the members of that division which our apostle maketh will be repeated. 2. That one Greek manuscript reads it *παῖδια*, in the twelfth verse, and so it is the same with the word in the thirteenth. 3. That in the Syriac and some Greek copies the variation of the verb from the present tense to the first aorist, begins at the iteration of *little children* in the end of the thirteenth, and is in these the beginning of the fourteenth verse. And to justify the order of enumeration, which seemeth to be irregular in beginning with little children, Grotius saith,\* that the apostle first sets down the extremes of little children and fathers, and then the middle, young men.

2. Others conceive the first, *little children*, in the twelfth verse to be a title by which the apostle bespeaketh all Christians, and then, in the thirteenth verse, he severally addresseth himself to fathers, young men, little children; and in the fourteenth verse (not without special reason, as shall appear in its due place), he repeateth his address to fathers and young men. This last interpretation, however Socinus is pleased to call it monstrous, seemeth to me, especially according to our received Greek copies (from which I see no cause to recede) the most genuine. My reasons briefly are these.

1. The original word for *little children* in the twelfth is different from that in the thirteenth, whereas, had the apostle intended the same thing, he would probably have used the same word in both places.

2. The original word in the twelfth verse is the same with that in the first verse, where it is plainly spoken of all sorts of Christians.

3. Whereas the reasons specified in the thirteenth verse are commendations, and those suitable to the several ages mentioned, as is obvious at the first view to any reader, the reason in the twelfth verse is a consolation, and such as equally belong to all Christians.

4. Lastly, according to this interpretation, the order of setting down the several ages is regular, beginning with fathers, and proceeding with young men, and descending to little children.

For these reasons I shall adhere to the latter inter-

\* Grot. *ibid*.

\* Aug. in Ep.

† Has omnes proprietates in omnium fidelium mentibus inesse maximè desiderabat, &c.—Justin. *in loc*.



pretation, and accordingly here are two things observable :

A general denomination, *little children* ;

A particular enumeration, *fathers, young men, little children*.

1. The general denomination is *παιδια*, by which (as Danæus well observeth\*) *omnes aetates complectitur*, the Christians of all ages are intended. It is a term which I have already had occasion to handle, and therefore shall now pass over with the more brevity.

Though it is true in a real notion, yet it is more probable that our apostle useth it in a metaphorical construction, and his design in it is double, namely, that this appellation might be both a testimony of his affection towards them, and a monitor to them of their duty, and in both these considerations there was a great deal of reason why our apostle should use this title of 'little children.'

1. He calls them little children, to testify that fatherly affection which he did bear to them, and this, no doubt, that hereby he might gain a filial affection from them towards him, and an affectionate regard to his doctrine. It is no small piece of policy in an orator to make way for his instruction by giving evidence of his affection, what appeareth to be spoken, is commonly taken, in love. No wonder then if St John, *ad majorem benevolentiam inducendam filiolos appellat*, as Justinian appositely,† for the gaining of their good will to him, declareth good will towards them by calling them little children.

And truly, so much the more cause had our apostle to endeavour this, in respect both of what he had and was to deliver.

He was now about to dissuade them from loving the world, a lesson to which they might probably be very averse, it being so hard for us, while we are in the world, not to be entangled with the love of it ; nay, perhaps they might think he was an enemy to them in requiring them to be enemies to the world, it being strange he should will them to contemn that whereof they had continual use. Now, by calling them *children*, and thereby insinuating that he spake to them as a *father*, they might justly persuade themselves that he advised them to nothing but what was for their good. Our blessed Saviour, Mat. vii. 9, 11, strongly argueth from the love of a father : 'If his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ?' a question intending a negation. Doubtless he will not ; nay, rather, if he ask him stones or a serpent, he will give him bread or fish. Fathers do not use to give, nor yet to advise their children what is hurtful, but useful for them ; and therefore, by calling them little children, he would let them know that how prejudicial soever this counsel of not loving the world might seem to them, it was

given by him as a Father, and that which he knew would be beneficial to them.

Again : He had but now sharply reprovèd those among them who did hate their brethren ; and lest they should account him guilty of the sin he reprovèd, as if his reprehension of them proceeded from hatred, he presently manifesteth his love by this sweet appellation, 'little children.' There is never more need of insinuating into auditors an opinion of our candid affection towards them, than when we use bitter invectives against their sins, men being very apt to misconstrue our hatred of their sins, as if it were malice against their persons. And truly, what expression could more represent affection than this of children ? Solomon saith, Prov. xxvii. 6, 'The wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy ;' and good reason, since there is more love in the one's wounds than the other's kiss ; and if the wounds of a friend, much more the reprovèds of a father, are from love. If it be a rod, the child must kiss it, because it is *virga patris*, the rod of a father ; and surely then, though it be a sharp rebuke, the child must embrace it, because it is *verbum patris*, the word of a father. *Amor*, saith the old man in the poet, *est optimum salsamentum*, love is that sauce which giveth a relish to things that are otherwise most distasteful and loathsome. Brotherly love, saith St Austin,\* and it is no less true of fatherly, *Sive approbet me, sive improbet me, diligit me*, whether it approve or reprove me, it still loveth me ; and where love is the sweet spring, though the waters be the waters of Marah, I may cheerfully drink them. That, therefore, our apostle might render his severe reprehension the more acceptable, he would have them know it was from that sincere and tender respect he bare to them ; and that he might convince them of this cordial respect, he bespake them as a father with this affectionate title, *little children*.

2. He styleth them little children to mind them of that duty which concerneth all Christians, in becoming as little children, and according to his Master's precept, Mat. xvii. 3, whose language he much delights to follow,

Indeed, it is that which is not to run parallel in all respects, and therefore, saith Jansenius,† the imitation of little children is either good or bad, according to the things wherein we resemble them. St Paul in one place, 1 Cor. xvi. 13, bids us *ἀνδρίζεσθε*, 'shew ourselves men, not women by cowardice, no, nor yet children by inconstancy ; nay, he expressly forbids, chap. xiv. 20, 'Be not children in understanding ;' and again, Eph. iv. 14, 'Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.' We must then be unlike and like to little children.

We must not think like little children, for they only mind what is present, whereas wisdom teacheth to look afar off and think of hereafter ; and yet we must think

\* Dan. in loc. See part i. p. 327.

† Justinian in loc.

\* Aug. Confess. lib. x. c. iv.

† Jans. Harmon.

as little children, for their thoughts are not carking and distrustful about what they should eat or drink, or wherewith they should be clothed. We must not desire as little children do, for they oftentimes desire things that may prove hurtful and destructive to them; and yet we must desire as little children, for their desires are earnest and important\* after the dug. We must not understand as little children, for they are but weak and defective in knowledge; and yet we must understand as little children, for they are docile and facile to learn. We must not speak as little children, for they speak rashly; and yet we must speak as little children, for they speak truly. We must not, like them, speak all we think; and yet, like them, we must speak nothing but what we think.

In few words, would we know wherein especially we ought to be as little children, look backward and forward to the sins here forbidden, and we shall find little children fit monitors of avoiding both; and perhaps, therefore, our apostle maketh choice of this appellation as very suitable to these instructions.

1. Little children are innocent and harmless, free from hatred and malice; they do not plot nor act mischief to others, they seek not revenge upon others; and this is that wherein chiefly we must resemble little children. To this purpose St Jerome,† Christ doth not require of his apostles that they should be little children in years, but innocency; and Theodoret, on that in the Psalms,‡ ‘Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength,’ asking the question, Who are those babes and sucklings? answereth, *Qui lactantium puerorum innocentiam imitati sunt*, they who imitate the innocency of sucking children. What need we a better expositor than St Paul, who admonisheth the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xiv. 20, ‘In malice be you children?’ And in this respect (as Tertullian’s phrase§ is) he would have the oldest men *repuerascere*, grow young again, and so in an excellent sense be twice children. *Semel senex bis puer*. Indeed, as Clemens Alexandrinus observes,|| concerning the prohibition of distrustful care, so may I concerning this of hatred and revenge: he that endeavours to fulfil it, *ἰστέ και παις Θεῷ τε και τῷ κόσμῳ*, is a child both in men’s and God’s account; the world thinketh him a child, yea, a fool, to put up injuries, and God esteemeth him as a child, yea, such a child of whom is the kingdom of God.

2. Little children are not covetous, nor ambitious, nor luxurious; they affect not variety of delicacies, they are not greedy of gain, nor puffed up with titles. *Si verberantur, non afficiuntur odio, nec si laudantur, arrogantia*,¶ if corrected, they hate not; if commended, they swell not. Thus ought Christians to deny worldly

lusts, and to conquer all inordinate desires. Holy David, comparing himself to a child, saith, Ps. cxxxi. 2, ‘My soul was even as a weaned child,’ which is no more greedy of the dug; so ought every good man to have his heart weaned from all the honours, and pleasures, and profits of this transitory world.

And surely well were it if even parents would in this regard go to school to their little children, and by their behaviour learn their own duty. The truth is, to a wise and understanding Christian, every creature is a preacher, and every day a Sabbath. With the bee, he sucketh honey out of every flower; above, the stars; beneath, the fruits; abroad, the beasts; at home, the little children are his instructors, of whom he learneth these excellent lessons, to contemn the world, and to abhor malice; which, that our apostle might the more strongly inculcate upon those to whom he wrote, he calls them little children. And so much be spoken of the general denomination in the 12th verse; pass we on to the

Particular enumeration, as it is set down in the 13th verse, *fathers, young men, little children*. I find among expositors a double reference of these expressions; by some to several degrees of grace, by others to several ages of life. According to the former construction, the words are to be interpreted metaphorically; according to the latter, literally.

Æcumenius, upon the place,\* asserts that our apostle intends by these titles to express the different sorts of Christians who were to receive his epistle, *διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν σωματικὴν ἀνζήσιν προαγορῆς και προκοπῆς*, whose different progress in Christianity he sets down with allusion to the increase of natural life. Origen is express both in a negative and positive way,† *Non corporales etates, sed animæ perfectionem differentem ponit*. By this phrase the apostle designeth to difference Christians, not according to the ages of their bodies, but the growth of their souls in grace; and in another place‡ he saith, this is so evident a truth, that he thinketh none ever doubted it. Though I am so far from excluding (with this allegorical father§) the literal construction, that I conceive it is most congruous, yet I shall not altogether waive the metaphorical sense. And thus there is a threefold degree of grace, which is shadowed by these three ages of life.

1. *Incipients*. They who are novices in Christianity, incipients in grace, are represented by little children, and if we look into the metaphor we shall find the parallel fit and full.

(1.) Little children are weak in body, they cannot go with strength, run with swiftness, act with vigour, but what they do, they do it weakly; so is it with beginners in religion, they complain of deadness, dullness, weakness, in performing holy duties. Instead of running, it is as much as they can do to go the way of

\* Qu. ‘importunate’?—Ed.

† Non præcipit apostolis ut ætatem habeant parvulorum sed innocentiam.—*Hier. in Matth.*

‡ Theod. in Psal

|| Cl. Al. pædagog. l. i. c. 6.

§ Tertul. adv. Valent. 21.

¶ Avend. in Mat.

\* Æcumen. in loc.

† Orig. in numer. hom. 9.

‡ Hom. i. in Cant.

§ Lap. in loc.



God's commandments; and in going, they often stop, nay, fall, though not through wilfulness, yet weakness.

(2.) Little children are low of stature, so are beginners in Christianity, dwarfs in piety. To have our conversation in heaven, is a lesson long in learning. We cannot presently nor easily 'mount up with the wings of an eagle.' Even they who loathe sin know not how to part with the world, and it is by many steps that they ascend to an heavenly life.

(3.) Little children are fed with milk, their stomachs being not fit to digest more solid food; thus beginners in religion are to be instructed in the rudiments of Christianity, as being incapable of higher mysteries. Christ's disciples, before the descension of the Holy Ghost, were but incipients, and therefore our Saviour tells them, John xvi. 12, 'I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them yet.' St Paul speaking of those Christians among the Corinthians, who were babes in Christ, saith, 1 Cor. iii. 2, 'I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able.' Those little children in the text had some divine knowledge, but it was very dim and imperfect, and as yet they had but sucked in the first principles of Christianity.

(4.) Little children are fickle and inconstant. Now this liketh them, and by and by it distasteth them; whatever you put into their hands, they quickly let it fall, taking no fast hold of it. Thus are weak Christians carried to and fro with every wind of doctrine: now this opinion pleaseth them, and anon it displeaseth them; and though the verities of Christian religion are inculcated upon them, they hold them not fast, but suffer themselves easily to be spoiled of them.

(5.) Finally, little children are full of fears, easily affrighted with any thing; so are spiritual babes, their faith being little, doubts arise, fears prevail. Weak sinners are presumptuous, weak Christians are timorous; and as the devil lulls those asleep in security, so he dismays them with anxiety.

2. *Proficients.* Those who have made some progress in Christianity are compared to young men. For,

(1.) As young men have good stomachs, whereby they both earnestly desire and easily digest solid meats, so it is with growing Christians: they receive the manna of the ordinances with attention, retain it by meditation, and so turn it into good nutriment by practice, they are able to chew and feed upon evangelical verities, to digest them in their understandings and memories; in which respect our apostle saith, The word of God abideth in them.

(2.) Young men are active and vigorous, having strong bodies and nimble joints, whereby they fulfil their employments without weariness. Thus are spiritual proficients ready to every good word and work. Divine commands are not grievous, Christ's yoke is easy to them, and they do the will of God with ala-

erity, for which reason our apostle saith of them they 'are strong.'

(3.) Young men are fit, by reason of their strength, for military employments, and upon all occasions are called forth to service; so are strong Christians fit to encounter with temptations, afflictions, persecutions, and through divine assistance to conquer them, upon which account it is said of these young men, they had 'overcome the wicked one.'

(4.) Young men have their blood boiling in their veins, their natural heat is sprightly in them; so is it with proficients in grace, the supernatural and spiritual heat of zeal is lively in their hearts, whereby it is that they boil as it were in love to God, and rage against sin.

(5.) Finally, Young men are healthful and lusty, and though they fall into a disease their bodies are able to wrestle with it, and nature gets the better; so have spiritual proficients an healthful frame of soul, whereby it is that they seldom fall into great diseases, I mean gross sins; and if at any time they do fall, grace struggleth with, and prevaiileth against, corruption.

3. *Perfecti.* They who are comparatively not only in respect of bad, but good, perfect Christians, having attained large measures of grace, are resembled to fathers.

(1.) Aged fathers know much by their own experience; so do perfect Christians: they are experienced in the subtilties of Satan, and deceits of their own hearts, the workings of grace and stirrings of corruptions, the assistances of God's Spirit, and manifestations of his love.

(2.) Aged fathers know things that are done many years ago, and perfect Christians (according to our apostle's phrase) 'have known him that is from the beginning;' converse with the Father of eternity, and so far as God hath unbosomed himself in his word, are acquainted with the thoughts he had from everlasting.

(3.) Lastly, aged fathers are usually fathers of many children; so are perfect Christians: they make it a great part of their business to admonish the negligent, support the feeble, reclaim the wandering, comfort the drooping, and by all means to convert and comfort their brethren.

To sum it up, *Habent omnes virtutes suas conceptiones, nativitates, incunabula, atatis incrementa*, saith an ancient.\* The virtues have their conception, birth, and growth, and that from [one] degree to another. The seed of grace which falls upon good ground, bringeth forth in some an hundred, in some sixty, and in some but thirty fold. All the Israelites did not gather the like quantity of manna, some an omer, and some an ephah, some much, some little. It is no less true of the spiritual Israelites in gathering grace. Among the ungodly† on Jacob's ladder, some were

\* Orig. in Num.

† Qu. 'angels'?—En.

above at the top, and others below at the foot, yet all upon the ladder. The like difference there is among Christians in their spiritual ascents. As in the heavens there are stars of several magnitudes, in schools there are scholars of several forms, in houses there are vessels of several bigness, so in the church there are Christians of several degrees, for there are fathers, and young men, and little children. The time was when thou who art a father wast a young man, nay, a little child; and the time may be, when they that are now little children may come to be young men, nay, fathers. He that hath most grace began with a little, and those weak striplings may prove strong giants in grace. If thou hast much, and others but little, thankfully acknowledge thy Father's mercy, but do not proudly scorn thy brother's infirmity.

Again, let not those who are as yet but little children be discouraged at, nor yet content with, those small measures of grace they have attained.

Let them not on the one hand be too much dejected. He that bids Peter feed his sheep, bids him withal to feed his lambs; yea, he who is himself the great Shepherd, taketh care of the little lambs as well as the grown sheep. When Nicodemus came to Christ with some few sparks of desire after him, our compassionate Redeemer, *non debabat sed alebat*,\* did not extinguish but cherish them. Besides, the covenant of grace is made with, and the promises of mercy are made to, faith, not only in strength but truth. A little child is as truly a man as a young man, as an old man; and a weak Christian is as truly a Christian as the most perfect saint. Conclude not too harshly against thyself from the premises of weak grace: *qui non potest volare ut aquila, volet ut passer*, if we cannot mount with the eagle, soar with the lark, let us fly with the sparrow; though we cannot with St Paul set our feet in the third heaven, yet let us lift up our hands and eyes thither. In a word, let us neither measure our goodness by another's want of it, nor our want of goodness by another's abundance, as if we had no grace, because but little, and not so great a measure as others.

Nor yet, on the other hand, let little children or young men be contented with what they have attained. The stature which a Christian is to strive after, is the 'stature of the fulness of Christ;' and, therefore, we must never come to our *maximum quod sic*, our full pitch. There is an holy and amiable ambition in Christianity. Oh how good would a good heart be! it looketh not only upon its sins but graces with grief and mourning, as that it hath been so bad, so that it is yet no better. *Peto ut accipiam, et cum accepero rursus peto*, I ask to receive grace, and when I have received, I ask again. *Nec ille deficit in dando, nec ego satior in accipiendo*, he is not weary of giving, nor am I satisfied with receiving; so St Jerome. Is then the foundation of piety laid? Bear up the build-

\* Aug.

ing every day higher than other, till it reacheth to heaven. Is the light of grace risen in thy soul? Let it shine more and more to the perfect day. Finally, art thou a little child, grow up to be a young man, yea, never cease till thou comest to be a father in Christ.\* And so much for the allegorical interpretation.

It is a received rule in interpreting Scripture, that the literal sense is to be adhered to, as most genuine, unless necessity enforce to recede from it. For this cause I conceive it most congruous to embrace the plain and proper meaning of the words, as they note the ages of men's life, though withal the other notion is here collaterally to be taken in. Those of these several ages, to whom St John writeth, were converted to Christianity, and proportionably, no doubt, as the little children were but weak, so as they grew up to be young men and fathers, they grow in grace.

For the better clearing of this construction, you must know that childhood, youth, and old age are the usual distinctions of man's age. I know some make, as it were, seven stages of the life of man: infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, middle age, old age, decrepit age; others reduce the seven to four: childhood, youth, manhood, old age,† the first whereof is reckoned to fifteen, the second to twenty-five, the third to thirty-seven, and the fourth to the end of life; and these four ages they resemble by the four elements in the world, the four seasons in the year, the four humours of the body, and the like. And one upon my text finding four words in these verses, *τεκνία, παῖδια, νεανίσκοι* and *πατέρες*, fits them to those four ages. David seemeth to comprise them in two, 'I have been young, and now am old,' Ps. xxxvii. 25. St Paul to Titus mentions only aged and young men, Titus ii. 34. But the most received distinction of man's age is threefold, as Beza well observeth; ‡ correspondent to which was that song of the Lacedæmonian choir, placed in three orders, whereof the first, who were the little children, sang, *Quod estis erimus*, that which you young and old men are, we shall be; the second, who were the old men, sang, *Quod estis fuimus*, that which you young men and little children are, we once were; and the third, which were the young men, sang, *Sumus quod alteri fuerunt, et alteri futuri sunt*, we are what you old men have been, and you little children are to be.

According to this tripartite division of man's age, our apostle reckoneth up fathers, young men, and little children.

1. He beginneth with fathers, by which he meaneth old men; for though the name *father* is properly *vox natura*,§ a word betokening a natural father,—in which respect whosoever hath a child is a father,—there are besides *patres religione*, fathers in respect of religion. So Elisha called Elijah *father*, who was a prophet; and it is usual to call bishops, nay, ordinary priests

\* Hier ad Ctesiph. adv. pelag.

† Aret. in loc.

‡ Beza in loc

§ Justin. in loc.



and ministers fathers, *patres dignitate*, fathers in regard of honour and dignity. Upon this account Naaman's servant called him (being a great man) *father*. Senators in Rome were styled *patres*, fathers; and kings are called *patres patriæ*, the fathers of the country over which they rule. Finally, *patres ætate*, fathers in respect of age; and so all who are stricken in years, are wont to be called fathers. In this sense it is manifestly here used by St John, and that *honoris ergo*, by way of reverence, whilst he thinketh it not fit in plain terms to call them *old men*, but in testification of his respect to them, *fathers*. Nor would it be passed by what this expression teacheth us, namely,

That reverence is due from young to old men, as from children to their fathers. What the apostle saith of marriage, Heb. xiii. 3, is no less true of old age, 'it is honourable among all men.' In Scripture heraldry, the 'ancient and the honourable' are put together, Isa. ix. 15; yea, the command is express, 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man,' Lev. xix. 32. It is not unfitly observed, that in the Greek language, *γηρας*, old age, and *γέρας*, an honorary reward, differ nothing as to sound, and only in a letter as to writing, to intimate that honour is due to old age.\* It was one of Chilon's golden precepts, *γήρας τιμᾶν*, to reverence old age. And Phocylides, his phrase is—

ἴσους τιμῆσι,

parents and old men are to have equal reverence. To this purpose it is that Anlus Gellius relateth concerning the ancient Romans,† that they did not more honour wealth, or birth, than age, and the younger did reverence the elder *ad Deum prope, et parentum vicem*, as if they were their parents, nay, gods; and this (saith he) they learned of the Lacedæmonians, who by Lycurgus his laws were enjoined great reverence to aged persons. Accordingly it is that both Ovid‡ and Juvenal§ tell us, what great honour was of old given to the hoary head, and how heinous a crime it was accounted, as deserving little less than death, if a young man did not rise up before the ancient.

How justly will the heathens of those ages rise up in judgment against the Christians of this; wherein old age is become contemptible, and youth malapert. What more usual than for green heads to contradict and vilify gray hairs! That brand which is set upon the nation God was resolved to send against rebellious Israel, Deut. xxviii. 30, is verified in too many, they 'respect not the person of the old.' Oh remember, antiquity is the image of eternity! God is called 'the

\* Cognata sunt *γηρας*, et *γέρας*, ἴδος, et ἴδος.—*Eustath.*

† Anl. Gell. lib. ii. cap. xv.

‡ Magna fuit quondam capitis reverentia cani.

—*Ovid Fast.* l. v.

§ Credebant tunc grande nefas et morte piandum,

Si veteri juvenis non assurrexerit, &c.

—*Juvenal. Sat.* xiii.

Ancient of days,' Dan. vii. 9, and though it is idolatry in the Romanists to picture God as an old man, yet we need not doubt to affirm that an old man is, as it were, the picture of the eternal God; and therefore, as in despising every man, so especially an aged man, we despise God's image.

Learn we then how to account of old men, namely, as fathers, and accordingly to give them all due regard in words, gestures, and actions. It is a good saying of Clemens Alexandrinus,\* when a man by age draweth near his end, *τασούτω τιμιώτερος προς ἀλήθειαν*, he is so much the more highly to be honoured. And Antiochus† assurcth us, that to respect the ancient is *πάνυ ἐναργεστον τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις*, very acceptable in the sight both of God and man. It is very considerable how St Paul adviseth Timothy, though an elder in respect of office, yet being young in years, that he should 'entreat the elder' (to wit, in age) 'as fathers,' 1 Tim. v. 1. And no less observable is this of St John, who, to manifest his respect to old age, when he meaneth old men, useth this honourable term of fathers.

2. By fathers, then, he meaneth them who were about fifty years old, or more, in their declining age, and had lived to see many days. From them he descendeth to young men; and though the word here used (as Pollux affirmeth‡) be especially meant of those who are in their fourth septenary, from one to eight and twenty, yet here the extent of it is (as Estius§ well observeth) a great deal larger, and comprehends all, *qui exeunt ex ephebis*, who are past fifteen, till they come to the age of fifty. From young men, he cometh yet lower, to little children; and though the diminutive word take in all little children (whilst yet they cannot go nor speak) from their very birth, yet here doubtless it must bear date from the time in which a child begins first to be capable of rational knowledge (it being not probable that St John did write to them who were in no capacity of reading or understanding what he wrote), and beginning at those years, it compriseth all who are in their nonage, and are not come to the years of one and twenty.

That, then, which our apostle here intimateth is, that there were of all these ages among the Christians. We read in the parable of the vineyard, Mat. xx. 3, 5, 6, that some labourers were hired to work at the third, some at the sixth, and others about the ninth and eleventh hour. Thus doth Christ call some little children with whom it is but the third, some young men with whom it is the sixth hour, some fathers with whom it is the ninth, nay, eleventh hour of the day. God in the law, saith Damianus,|| made choice of bullocks and lambs to be offered in sacrifice to him, thereby intimating the diversity of those whom he brings home to himself: *Alii grandævâ senectute maturi,*

\* Clem. Alex. pædag. lib. ii. cap. iii.

† Antioch. hom. cix.

§ Est. in loc.

‡ Vide Casanb. exercitat.

|| Pet. Dam. l. vi. cp. 17.

*alii juvenilis incrementi vigore robusti*, some being of ripe, and others of green years. Look as in an orchard, there are tender plants, middlings, and old trees, so are there in God's church persons of all ages. It is otherwise in this respect (as well as others) in the spiritual than in the temporal warfare. In other wars, as priests are exempted by their calling, women by their sex, sick and impotent persons by their indisposition of body, so old men and children by their years; but not so in this, to which children, so soon as they begin to understand, are engaged, and old men so long as they live. The Hebrew proverb saith of Golgotha, that there are in it skulls of all sizes; and as in the churchyard there are dead bodies, so in the church there are living Christians of all years; as the devil hath his slaves among old men, young men, little children,—for the prophet saith of the idolatrous heathen, Jer. vii. 17, 18, that the 'fathers kindled the fire, and the women kneaded the dough, and the children gathered sticks to make cakes for the queen of heaven'—so God hath his servants, and Christ his members, for St Paul speaketh of faith dwelling in the grandmother Lois, the mother Eunice, and Timothy the child, 2 Tim. i. 5. Among old men and women, we read of Abraham and Sarah, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Paul the aged, and Mnason the old disciple; among young men, we read of Josiah the young king, 2 Chron. xxxiv., and Phinehas the young priest, and Daniel the young prophet; among little children, of Samuel ministering before the Lord from a child, 1 Sam. ii., and Timothy instructed in the Scriptures from a child, 2 Tim. iii. 15, and the children crying Hosanna to Christ, when he came riding to Jerusalem, Mat. xxi. 16, 17. Sometimes God is pleased to instil grace into the hearts of little ones; sometimes he giveth a stop to young men in their evil course; sometimes he maketh old men the monuments not only of his patience in sparing them so long, but of his goodness in bringing them to repentance at last; or else

confers upon towardly little children, and virtuous young men, the reward of length of days in this life, whereby they come to be old.

To draw to an end. I trust, beloved, it may be said of some, of many, of all these ages, in this city, parish, congregation, that they are among the number of those who are (at the 12th verse) called 'little children,' begotten again, and renewed by the Holy Ghost. Sure I am, it concerneth us all, of all ages, to be of that number.

It is high time for you that are fathers (if you have not already) now to bring forth fruit to God; nor let the old man say, in the eunuch's language, 'I am a dry tree,' there is no hopes of my fruitfulness. Young devils may prove old saints. He that maketh dry bones to live can make the dry trees to flourish. Rather double your prayers and endeavours to bring forth much fruit in a little time; and if you have been already 'planted in the house of the Lord,' be careful still to 'bring forth fruit in old age.'

It is full time for you that are young men to study the divine art of Christianity, though whilst you were children you did, and spake, and understood as children; yet now you are become men, put away childish things, mind what concerneth God's glory and your own salvation.

Nor let little children say with those Jews, It is not time to rear the building of religion. The work is long, and the time at longest but short; you had need begin betimes. The journey is great, and the time but a day to go it in; there is reason you should set forth early. In one word, let fathers be exemplary in piety, let young men be forward in grace, let little children make haste to be good; so shall there be still in the church of Christ militant, fathers, young men, little children, till the last day come, when there shall be neither old men nor little children, but all shall be young men, of full stature and perfect age, to all eternity, in the church triumphant.

### SERMON XXXIV.

*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.—*  
1 JOHN II. 12-14.

**T**HERE are three things which commend the excellency and worth of any writing or doctrine: purity of matter, antiquity of original, and generality of use. Indeed, those doctrines which patronise any sin are to be wholly rejected, which broach any novelty are justly to be suspected, and those which are only of some particular concernment are not generally to be

regarded. But when the things delivered are pure, the authority of them unquestionable, and their utility universal, they cannot but challenge our attention and reception. Such is the evangelical doctrine; such are the apostolical writings; such, in particular, is this epistle. To this purpose it is that in this very chapter St John asserts all these concerning his doc-



trines: their unspotted purity, verse 1st, where he saith, 'These things I write to you, that you sin not;' their unquestionable antiquity, verse 7th, where he saith, 'I write not a new commandment to you, but an old: the old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning;' finally, their general extent, in these verses, as reaching to all of all ages, 'I write to you, little children,' &c.

2. Having handled the first part of this scripture, namely, the persons specified, pass we on to the second, which is the *act performed* by St John towards these persons; and that is, *writing*, as it is often expressed in the several verses. That I may give you a full account of this part, I shall consider the act here mentioned,

1. Absolutely, and therein take notice both of the act itself, and the iteration of it.

2. Relatively. In reference to the agent, *who*; the subject, *to whom*; and the object *about which* he writes.

1. In the absolute consideration we are to,

1. Begin with the act expressed, in the word *write*. St John had spoken before, yea, no doubt, by preaching the gospel to them, had been the means of their conversion (whom therefore he calls, in the first verse, 'my little children'), and now to his former speaking he addeth writing. Thus Calvin\* conceiveth that the prophets did write a summary or abridgment of those messages they delivered, which were for some time affixed to the gates of the temple for the people to read, and afterward taken down and laid in the treasury. And it is expressly asserted concerning God himself, that after he had given the law, speaking the ten words with his own lips, he wrote them with his own fingers in two tables of stone.

\* *Quest.* If you shall inquire a reason why God would have his word not only spoken, but written, and his apostles not only Naphtalis, to 'give goodly words,' but Zebulons, to 'handle the pen;' and not only orators, but secretaries?

*Ans.* I answer, Upon a threefold ground, drawn from themselves, their people, and the truth they had delivered.

1. In regard of themselves, inasmuch as writing was a supply of their absence. The mother cannot be always present with the babe to suckle it with the dug, and therefore she provideth a sucking bottle to refresh it in her absence. Thus the apostles, because they could not be in many places at once, and consequently not always present with their scattered flock, vouchsafed to write to them, that their writings might be instead of vocal instructions.

2. In regard of the people, since these writings were an excellent means both of strengthening their memories and confirming their faith.

(1.) The writing did bring to the people's remembrance what the apostles had formerly taught them. This, St Peter asserteth as the end of his writing,

\* Calvin *præfat.* in Is.

2 Pet. iii. 1, to 'stir up the pure minds of the people by way of remembrance,' it being a great prop to memory, when those truths which have been sounded in the ear are afterwards presented to the eye, whilst what was lost to the one is restored to the other, and so truth secured to the memory.

(2.) These writings were no small confirmation of the people in the faith. By speaking, the apostles did, as it were, lay the foundation, and by writing they reared the fabric; by preaching, they planted, and by writing watered; finally, by speaking, they converted heathens to, and by writing they corroborated the Christians in, the faith.

3. Once more. In regard of the truths themselves, that they might hereby be perpetuated to posterity. To this purpose Rivet asserteth the writings of God's word as not only profitable, but necessary, *labili memorie et posterorum successioni*, as to help the weakness of memory, so to transmit revelations to after ages. Ælian reporteth of certain frogs which, taking a kind of reed into their mouths,\* save themselves from the water serpents that would devour them. Thus, the holy apostles, by taking a pen into their hands, have preserved those precious truths which the devil endeavoureth to swallow up. By which it appears, that the sacred writings, though they were directed to them who then lived, yet they are intended for us. St Paul saith, Rom. xv. 4, of the writings of the Old Testament, that 'the things which were written aforetime were written for our learning.' The like may we say of the writings both of the New and Old Testament, they are for our use and instruction.

And surely this *γράφω* calls for a *λέγω*. Reading is the end of writing; and, since the apostles took the pains to write, it is but just we should bestow the time to read. It was a sad complaint of God himself against Israel, 'I have written to them the great things of my law, and they have accounted them as a strange thing,' Hos. viii. 12. Oh that the like accusation might not be charged by Christ upon us, I have written to them the great things of my gospel, but they have counted them as a strange thing, and are strangers to them! How sad is it to think, that whereas David's blessed man 'meditateth on God's law day and night,' Ps. i. 2, with many of us, days and nights, nay, weeks and months, pass away without reading and meditating on the sacred writings. Oh let us wipe off the dust of contempt from the cover of our Bibles, and recall them from the land of forgetfulness, whither our neglect hath banished them.

2. It would yet further be taken notice of, that here is not only a *γράφω*, *I write*, in the thirteenth, but an *ἔγραψα*, *I have written*, in the fourteenth verse, the sense whereof is fitly rendered by Estius† to be *scripsi, iterumque scribo*, I have written, and again I write. Our apostle doth not only add precept to precept, but line to line, concerning the same precept; and, though

\* Ælian, *Histor. Animal.*

† Est. in loc.

he had written just before, yet he writeth again. Nor are we to imagine it was through want of matter, but abundance of zeal, that our apostle striketh a second time upon the same string. That workman who would fasten the nail in the wall, must drive it home to the head by repeated blows. Many times, as second thoughts are better, so second admonitions are stronger, and have a more prevailing influence. Some, indeed, awake at the first call, but the most have need of a second, nay, a third. Calvin too rashly judgeth these repetitions in the fourteenth verse to be superfluous;\* yet, I would to God they were; but St John knew it otherwise, and we cannot but observe it in our own experience, there is a great necessity, and therefore just reason, that we should write and speak the same lesson once and again. And surely, if it concerneth us to write, it becometh you to read the same writings again and again; the one must not be grievous to us, nor the other tedious for you. Some things need to be read once and again, that we may understand them; or, if reading once, we understand, let us read again that we may remember; and, if we understand and remember, let us read again, that we may find our affections enlivened.

2. Having viewed the absolute, pass we on to the relative consideration of this act, and that in reference,

1. To the agent. That which here this holy apostle taketh to himself, is only the writing, not the inditing. He was the scribe, but the Spirit of God dictated; or, if you will, he was the pen, but the Spirit the hand that guided it. It is St Peter's general assertion, 2 Pet. i. 21, 'The holy men of God spake as being moved by the Holy Ghost.' And St Paul is no less express when he saith, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 'All Scripture is Θεοπνευστος, of divine inspiration.' The πνεύω, *inspiring*, is God's part, and the γράφω, *writing*, was the apostles'. Indeed, we find two expressions which seem directly opposite one to the other, whenas, in the tenth verse of the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle saith, 'I command you; not I, but the Lord;' and in the twelfth verse, 'speak I, not the Lord.' But it will be easily solved, if we consider that St Paul refers to the doctrine which the Lord Christ delivered himself concerning divorcees; wherein, though there is a general prohibition (except in case of fornication, Mat. v. 31, 32), yet there is nothing in particular concerning the case of difference in religion, when the one is a Christian and the other a pagan;† and therefore, whereas in the general mandate St Paul saith, 'not I, but the Lord,' in the particular counsel he saith, 'I, not the Lord;' that is, the Lord Christ hath not said anything expressly as to this present case. But still, what St Paul said in it, was by the dictate of God's Spirit; and, therefore, in the end of that chapter, he closeth with this, 'I

think also' (which is ἐμφατική μείωσις, an emphatical diminution, expressing more than an opinion, a confident knowledge) 'that I have the Spirit of God.'

And surely this consideration is that which should oblige us to read apostolical writings with reverence, looking beyond the penman to God who inspired them. Far be it from any of us to think of these writings, what Julian said of certain papers,\* which were sent him in vindication of the Christian religion, ἀνέγνω, ἔγνω, κατέγνω, I have read, I understand, I despise them; no, rather let us admire and adore them. The truth is in the very writings themselves; there is that verity, purity, and elegancy, which may render them acceptable; but when, besides, we ponder their authority, they call not only for acceptance but reverence.

Nor is it enough thus to read, but we must labour for a trauscript of what we read, that what is written in the book may be written in our hearts; and truly, not only the πνεύω, but the γράφω, in this sense belongs to God's Spirit. The apostle may *write to* them, but it is the Spirit must *write in* them. God appropriateth it to himself as his own act, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.' In reading, therefore, the sacred books, let us implore that Spirit which dictated to the penman, to imprint upon our hearts, that so we may be transformed into the image of those truths we read, and have within us a copy of the writing without us.

2. To the subject, fathers, young men, children; and here,

1. It would be observed that our apostle, in writing, contents not himself with generalities, but directs his discourse particularly. Like a good archer, he doth not shoot at random, but level the arrow of his admonition at the several marks; or like the master of a feast, doth not only set whole dishes, but carveth to his several guests. Indeed, as Calvin well noteth, † *generalis sermo minus afficit*, what is spoken generally to all is too often looked upon as if it belonged to none. We are all very apt to put off rebukes and counsels, as if they did not concern us; and our question, like that of Peter's, is, John xxi. 21, 'What shall this man do?' not like that of the jailor, Acts xvi. 30, 'What shall I do?' and therefore it is a pious prudence in the minister to bring home his discourse by particuler application to the various conditions of his auditors. Thus St Paul, in his epistle, laid down instructions for men, for women, for the aged, and the young; for parents, for children, for masters, for servants; and here St John writeth not only to all Christians, ver. 12, but particularly to fathers, young men, children, ver. 13, 14.

2. Observe, St John in his writing excuseth not old men, nor yet excludeth little children.

1. On the one hand, St John, writing to old men, intimateth that none are too old to learn divine doctrines; and therefore they must not think scorn that

\* Calv. in loc.

† Non Dominus sc. expressè sive totidem verbis, sive suo ipsius ore.—Stat. *ibid.*

\* Bas. Epist 207.

† Calv. in loc.



the ministers of God should instruct them. Elegant is that of Seneca,\* *Tamdiu audiendum et descendum est quamdiu nescias, quamdiu vicas*, we must hear so long as we are ignorant, and learn so long as we live. More appositely St Austin†, *Ad descendum et audiendum nulla aetas senex rideri potest*, no age exempts from instruction. Since, though it is more proper for old men to teach than learn, yet it is better for them to learn than to be ignorant. Indeed, St Paul justly blameth those who were 'ever learning, and never came to the knowledge of the truth;' but yet those who are come to the knowledge of the truth must be ever learning, even to their dying day. It is no other than a base pride of spirit which causeth men to account themselves either too wise or too old to be taught in the ways of God. It were a strange reasoning if an old man, being constrained to take a tedious journey, and not knowing the way, should say thus within himself, I know not where I am, but I will not ask the way, because I am old; and is not their folly great who reason thus about the way to heaven? Indeed, when we address ourselves to the ancient, we must manage our counsels with respect, not imperiously commanding or malapertly reproving, but humbly entreating, and meekly admonishing them; yet still neither must they think much to be minded of, nor must we neglect to acquaint them with their duty, for thus St John, as he gives them the reverend title of fathers, so he writeth to them for their instruction.

2. On the other hand, St John, writing to little children, intimateth, that care ought to be taken for the institution of little children.

Indeed, little children are most fit to be taught, *cilius assuescit omne quod tenerum*,‡ we tame a lion when it is young, heal a wound whilst it is green, break an horse whilst it is a colt, teach a dog whilst it is a whelp, bow a tree whilst it is a twig, and men, as well as other creatures, are most easily instructed whilst young.

2. Besides, what we learn whilst little children, as it is most easily received, so most firmly retained, *altius precepta descendunt que teneris imprimuntur aetatibus*,§ those precepts which are cast into the minds of little ones take deepest root. That of the poet is well known,|| vessels keep the liquor longest with which they are first seasoned; and Solomon assureth us, Prov. xxii. 6, 'Train a child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it when he is old.'

3. Add to this, that if children be not instructed in good, they will learn evil things. Man's mind is like the ground, into which, if good seed be not cast, evil weeds will spring up; or like a restless mill which cannot stand still, so that, if it be not taken up with

virtues, it will employ itself in vicious practices. Indeed, as the heathen saith truly,\* *omnes preoccupati sumus*, we are all forestalled, and our minds are naturally inclined to what is evil; the mere need to endeavour the plucking it up before it fasten too much in, and take too much hold upon us. Upon all these considerations, no wonder if St John take little children, as well as young men, into his tuition, by writing to them.

And surely this is that which should mind parents to take heed of delays in providing for the ingenious and pious education of their children, encourage school-masters to the discharge of their calling, which, though conversant about little children, is of great use and benefit. Finally, advertise ministers to take care for catechising the little children, as well as instructing young men and fathers. Our blessed Saviour had so great a respect for little children, that he blamed those who would have kept them from him, embraced them in his arms, and blessed them, Mark x. 16. David, though a king, disdaineth not to be a teacher of children, Ps. xxiv. 10; many of the ancient fathers, Clemens, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nyssen, were catechists, whose office is to instruct little children; yea, here this holy apostle leaveth not out in his writings little children. And so much for the second.

The last reference of this act is to the object whereabout this writing is conversant. It is that which is not expressed in the text, and therefore is supplied by expositors, yet not without some difference.

I find among interpreters a threefold construction of this γάρω, I write, as to the matter of it.

1. Some† enlarge it, as extending to the whole epistle, and so these verses are a digression from the preceding matter; and they may well be called the epistle dedicatory, wherein St John giveth an account to whom his epistle is written, all Christians in general, and in particular to fathers, young men, and children.

2. Others‡ refer these verses to the duty of brotherly love before mentioned; and having commended the worth, he here sheweth the fitness of it to all ages of men. I write τὴν ἐπιτολὴν πατρῶν, this commandment of love, to you fathers, young men, children; according to which construction these verses look backward, and are a close of the preceding discourse. That which strengthens this reference is, that it manifestly appeareth a great part of this epistle insisisth upon the duty of love; and, therefore, no wonder if our apostle, when first he speaketh of it, both prefixeth a proemium, declaring its antiquity, and affixeth a peroration, discovering its congruity to all sorts of Christians.

3. Finally, others§ refer these verses to that prohibition of worldly love, which followeth in the 15th, 16th,

\* Sen. Ep. 77.

† Pelag. ad Demetr.

‡ Aug. Ep. ad Hier. § Quint. Institutio, lib. i. cap. 1.

|| Quo semel est imbuta recens.—Horat. Ep. 2.

\* Sen. Ep. li.

† Beza, Zanc., Justin., in loc.

‡ Calv. in loc

§ Est in loc. Dr Hamm. paraph.

and 17th verses; and so it looketh forward, and is as it were an exordium, to make way for that inhibition which he knew would be so unwelcome to the most, though it concerned them all.

And now, though, by what is already said, I conceive the middlemost of these most rational, yet since none of them are either improbable or unprofitable, I shall handle each.

1. If we extend this *writing* to the whole epistle, that which would be observed is the community of the holy Scriptures. This epistle was written by St John, not only to strong but weak Christians, to old but young men, nay, little children; and if it was written, certainly it was intended that it should be read to them publicly, and by them privately for their edification. Nor is this less true of the other writings of this apostle, of the writings of the other apostles, and of the prophets; and therefore Vorstius\* layeth it down as a general doctrine from this text, *Sacra Scriptura omnibus fidelibus cujuscunque aetatis aut conditionis (dummodo capaces doctrinae) est destinata*, the holy Scripture is written for all ages and conditions of Christians who are capable of instruction.

It is very observable to this purpose what care St Paul took for the public reading of his epistle to the Colossians, and not only to them, but the Laodiceans, Col. iv. 16; what a solemn charge and adjuration by the Lord he gives, that his first epistle to the Thessalonians be read to all the holy brethren. This practice of public reading was used by the Jewish church, who had Moses and the prophets read in their synagogues on the Sabbath day, and accordingly it was followed by the Christian church in the primitive times. Justin Martyr assureth us,† that in the public assembly on the Lord's day, τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγινώσκονται, some of the apostolical and prophetic writings were read to the people; and Tertullian‡ saith, *Convenimus ad literarum divinarum commemorationem*, one end of our meetings is the commemoration of the holy Scriptures. Rhenanus, quoting this passage in his annotations upon another book of that father's, § breatheth forth that pious wish, *Utinam redeat ad nos ista consuetudo*, Oh that this custom were in use among us. That note of St Jerome, || upon those words of the psalmist, Ps. lxxxvii. 6, 'The Lord shall count when he writes up the people,' as translated by him, would not be passed by, *Dominus narrabit in scriptura populorum*, the Lord shall declare in the writings of the people: so he renders it; that is, *in scripturis sanctis*, in the holy Scriptures; so he glosses it, and presently adds, *Quae Scriptura populis omnibus legitur, hoc est ut omnes intelligent*, the Scripture is read unto all the people, to the end all may understand it.

Nor are the sacred writings only to be read *to*, but *by* the people, of what age and condition soever. It is very observable to this purpose how the psalmist inviteth every man (and, as St Basil\* notes upon the place, he doth not exclude the women), to 'meditate day and night (which supposeth reading) 'on the law of God' by a promise of blessedness. Nay, St John, in the beginning of that obscure book of the Revelation, asserts, Rev. i. 2, 'Blessed is he that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecy,' as if by that assurance of bliss he would invite every man to the reading of it. Indeed, there want not express precepts in this kind; it is our Saviour's command concerning the old Testament, John v. 39, 'Search the Scriptures;' and, saith St Cyril, † τὰς Ἰουδαίων δήμερος προσεφώνησεν ὁ Χριστός. Christ gives this charge to the people of the Jews. Nor is this assertion without plain proof; for those to whom Christ speaks these words were they who sent to John, and they who sent the priests and Levites to John were the common people of the Jews. ‡ Nor are we to imagine this as a peculiar indulgence to the Jews at that time because of their incredulity, unless a preceding prohibition can appear, denying the search of the Scriptures to them, which, since it is not to be found, we truly affirm it to be a general mandate. And Origen§ inferreth thence an affectionate desire concerning Christians: *Utinam omnes faceremus illud quod scriptum est, scrutamini scripturas*, I would to God we would all follow that command, Search the Scriptures. St Paul, speaking of the New Testament, which is most peculiarly the word of Christ, adviseth the Colossians, chap. iii. 16, and in them all sorts of Christians, 'Let it dwell in you richly in all wisdom; and St Jerome notes on that place, *In hoc ostenditur verbum Christi non sufficienter sed abundanter etiam laicos habere debere*. Hereby is asserted that the laity ought to have the word of Christ in them not only sufficiently, but abundantly. And St Chrysostom's exhortation upon those words is very general, || ἀκούσατε πάντες οἱ βιώσικοι καὶ πᾶσθε βιβλία, hear, all you that are employed in the things of this life, get Bibles, at least the New Testament. Nor are we to think that the father's zeal transported him so far as to press that as a duty which yet was not consonant to reason, or to put the people upon doing what the church forbade them.

Both these, to wit, the reading of the Scriptures *to* and *by* all sorts and ages of Christians, being clear, it will be needless to insist upon the necessity of translating them into the languages of several countries, since otherwise the reading of them to the unlearned would be in vain, and by them impossible. Indeed, when the church was confined to the nation of the Jews (in whose language the Old Testament was

\* Vorst. in loc. † Just Mart. Apolog. 2.

‡ Tertull. Apol.

§ B. Rhenan. Annot. in l. de coronâ militis.

|| Hier. in Ps.

\* Bas. in Ps. i. † Cyr. Alex. in Joh.

‡ Vide Cæsar. Arelat. Episc. hom. xx. in Bibli. pat. t. 2.

§ Orig. hom. xxii. in Isa. || Chrysost. hom. ix. in Col.



written), there was no need of translating it; but since the christian Church spread over all the world, there have been various translations of particular parcels, yea, the whole Bible, into several languages, that those writings which belong to, may be in some measure understood by, all.

Indeed, when we seriously weigh those several metaphors to which the word is compared, especially those of a light, and food, and a sword, we may easily discern of how necessary use it is for all Christians. David calls it a 'lantern to his feet, and a light to his paths,' Ps. cxix. 107. And surely, then, there is no traveller to that celestial Canaan but hath need of this light to direct him in his journey, and discover to him his way. What food is to the body, that is the word to the soul; yea, it is such as affords both meat for men and milk for babes, according to St Paul's distinction. *Est in illis* (saith St Austin\* of these writings) *quod perfectus comedat, est etiam quod parvulus sugat*, there is in them what the perfect Christian may eat, and what the weakling may suck. No wonder if that divine poet† saith of the holy Scripture,

Nullis animis, nullis non congruit annis,

it befits all minds and years. - Finally, St Paul, reckoning up the pieces of our spiritual armour, calleth the word of God the 'sword of the Spirit.' And of all weapons, none more common than the sword. No warrior, from the general to the meanest officer, nay, common soldier, goeth without his sword; and since all of all ages are engaged to the Christian warfare, there is great reason why this spiritual sword should be afforded to them.

By what hath been said, the practice of the church of Rome in withholding the free use of the Scriptures from the common people appeareth very unjust and impious. Look, as it is tyranny in the commonwealth (to use Chamier's‡ comparison) which causeth jealous rulers to deprive the people of their armour, so is it superstition in the church which denieth ordinary Christians the reading of the word, which is their best piece of armour. Indeed, what do they by this means but render the Bible useless, whilst it is a fountain sealed, or a treasury locked up, whence no benefit can be expected?

The only plausible argument which the papists urge in defence of this practice is that abuse which ignorant and profane persons are apt to make of the Scriptures, for the patronising both of errors and vices, whereby it is that they wrest them to their own perdition.

That thus it too often falls out is not to be denied, but that therefore the free use of the Scriptures is to be interdicted, cannot be granted. When St Peter tells us, 2 Peter iii. 11, that 'unlearned and unstable souls did wrest many things in St Paul's epistles, and other

scriptures, to their own perdition,' he plainly intimateth that there was then given a liberty to the unlearned of reading the Scriptures, else how could they have wrested them? Nor doth he from the wresting infer a prohibition of reading, but only an advice to those to whom he writes, that they were not 'led away with the error of the wicked.'

To clear this further, you may please to know that,

1. This perverting is only an accidental consequent, not a necessary or natural effect of reading the Scriptures. St Paul saith expressly, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 'The whole Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. For these ends it is intended by God, to these it tends in its own nature; and if any contrary use be made of these books, it is an event, but not an effect, and they only an occasion, but no cause.

2. That the accidental evil of what is in itself good, and by its proper efficacy produceth a good, greater, or as great, as the evil, is no just ground for the denegation of the good. True it is, evil must not be done that good may come of it; but it is as true, that good must not be left undone though evil come of it. The practice of that king was no way commendable, who cut down all the vines in his country, because some men were drunk with the wine. It would be a mad edict which should forbid men their meat and drink, because many surfeit through excess. Hezekiah's destroying the brazen serpent because some men idolized it, had not been justified if there had been the like benefit by, and use of it in his as in Moses his time. It is an excellent rule of Tertullian,\* *Multum differt inter causam et culpam, statum et excessum; non institutio bonæ rei, sed exorbitatio, reprobanda est.* To give you the sense of it in short English: The evil abuse of a good thing is no sufficient cause for the total disuse, especially where the use countervaileth the abuse. That so it is in this present case is evident; the good which men generally reap by reading the Scriptures being far greater than the evil which some men occasionally draw from it. If, then, this sword, which is put into the hand of any Christian for his defence against his spiritual adversaries, be by some mad men turned upon their own and others' breasts, the guilt must lie upon the wicked abuser of this sacred weapon, nor must the rest of Christ's soldiers be debarred of it.

Indeed, this liberty which I have now pleaded for must be both given and taken with a restriction, by putting a difference between the reading and interpreting of scriptures. Every one may read the Bible, and every one must labour to understand what they read; but every one may not, ought not, to undertake the expounding of it. None may be wise above what is written, nor must weak novices think themselves so wise as to interpret what is written. Little children and young men must ask the fathers, private Chris-

\* Tertul. adv. Marc. lib. i.

\* Aug. ep. 3, ad Volusian. † Cham. de Canone disput. ‡ Prudent.

tians must inquire of the pastors and doctors of the church, whom God hath appointed in a peculiar manner for that end. Just, therefore, is that complaint which St Jerome made of his times \* (and I would to God it did not fit this present age), whereas in secular matters every man followeth his particular occupation,

Tractant fabrilia fabri,

as the poet's † expression is; the smith meddleth with his anvil, the carpenter with his rule, the shoemaker with his last. *Sola Scripturarum ars est quam sibi omnes vendicant*, the profound art of opening Scripture is that which all sorts presume to assume to themselves. Every prattling gossip, and doating fool, and malapert boy, will be meddling with the Scriptures, and instead of dividing, mangle it; expounding, wrest it, taking upon them to teach, whilst yet they have more need to learn. Politicians say that anarchy is worse than tyranny; and it were better to live where nothing than where all things are lawful; and truly in the church, it is hard to determine which is worse, the papistical tyranny of forbidding all to read, or the anabaptistical anarchy of allowing all to expound the Scriptures.

To close up this, how great is our happiness (did or would we know) who live in the bosom of such a church, which, as she denieth an unjust, so she indulgeth to us our just liberty. And how great is both our unhappiness and wickedness, whilst some boldly intrench upon the one, and more carelessly neglect the other. Let it then be the practice of all, both old and young, to read these holy writings. ‡ Think it not enough to hear them read in the church, but *in domibus vestris aut vos legite aut alios legentes requirite*, § at home, either read them yourselves, or cause them to be read to you. Let not any excuse themselves, saying, *Non sum monachus*, I am no monk; seculars are bound to this duty. *Non novi literas*, I am not book-learned; the greater thine and thy parents' negligence; and, however, thou mayest obtain to have them read to thee. And when in reading or hearing these sacred books you meet with difficulties, repair to the priest, whose lips preserve knowledge; knock once and again by prayer for the spirit of illumination; and in this case make use of Solomon's counsel, Prov. ii. 5, lean not to thy own understanding.

These things are written to you, fathers. Be not you strangers to them. Exercise yourselves in these books; make them, with David, your delight and your counsellor. They are written unto you, young men; follow the psalmist's counsel, and by taking heed to this word, learn to cleanse your ways. They are written to you, little children; do you begin to acquaint yourselves with them. It is recorded for the praise of Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15, that from a child,

ρουτέστιν ἐκ πρώτης ἡλικίας, from his first years\* wherein he was capable of learning and instruction, 'he knew the holy Scriptures.' It is observed that the 119th Psalm is disposed according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, perhaps to intimate that children, when they begin to learn their alphabet, should learn that Psalm. The Jews (as a learned popish bishop † hath noted), *filios suos quinquennes ad sacra Biblia adaptabant*, began to acquaint their children at five years of age with the Bible; and, *pudeat Christianos*, what a shame is it for Christians not to begin as early as the Jews. It was the charge Ignatius gave to the parents, ‡ that they should bring up their children in the nurture of the Lord; and to that end, *διδάσκειν ἑαυτοῖς τὰ ἱερά γραμματα*, that they should teach them the holy Scriptures. What if children cannot for the present understand? yet they can remember what they read in the Scriptures, and the reading of them maketh such impressions upon their minds, which are of singular use to them afterwards. Nor is it any profanation of those holy writings for children to take them into their mouths, though they cannot read them with that knowledge, and, consequently, devotion, as is required in, and expected from, young men and fathers. It is very unlikely that those children knew the meaning of *Hosanna*, whom yet Christ forbade not to utter it. It is both piety and prudence to deal with little children according to their capacity. Let them first be accustomed to read, and then to remember; and by this means, in due time they will be brought to understand and affect those holy writings.

Though, withal, prudence adviseth that in reading there be a gradual order observed, beginning with such parcels of holy writ as are most necessary and easy to be known: the Lord's prayer, the commandments, the sermon of Christ upon the mount, many of the psalms of David, Proverbs of Solomon, and such like portions of Scripture, would first be taught to children, and young men would be advised to be conversant in, not attempting to look into the more dark and mysterious parts of Scripture till they have attained, by being catechised, by hearing sermons, and other godly helps, some good measure of divine knowledge; and then in reading what they cannot understand, with humility to admire, and modesty to inquire into the sense and meaning of such scriptures.

2. But further, if we refer this γάρω, I write, to that command of love which is prescribed in the preceding verses, that which is here intimated is, that love is such a command as belongs to all sorts of Christians and ages of men.

1. It belongs to all sorts of Christians. Little children, weak Christians, are obliged to love. Patience under the cross, joyfulness in tribulation, spiritualness

\* Hieron. Ep. ad Paulin. † Aug. serm. v. de Temp.  
† Horat. ‡ Damasc. de Orthod. Fide. l. iv. c. 18.

\* Chrysost. ibid. † Ignat. Ep. ad Philad.  
‡ Espenceus in Tim.



in duty, and such like qualifications, are not attained till we come to be young men, nay, fathers; but brotherly love is to be practised by, and is expected of, them who are but little children in Christianity. Indeed, this is one of the first graces which discovers itself in a saint; and even then when a weak Christian cannot say, *I believe in Christ*, yet he can say, *I love my brother*. Nor is this duty to be laid aside when we come to be young men, yea, fathers; strong, yea, perfect Christians; since as we abound in other graces, so especially we must abound in this; and the perfecting of a Christian consists much in the perfecting of his love. Indeed, when many other graces shall cease, love shall remain, the great employment of glorified saints being to praise God, and love one another.

2. It belongs to all ages of men. None but ought to practise, and have need to be admonished of it. The poison of anger and hatred is apt to creep into us betimes; little children are prone to fall out and quarrel and fight one with another; and young men being in heat of blood very often boil over with rage, yea, old men are apt to be peevish and froward, so that every age stands in need of this bridle of love to restrain their passion. One of the first lessons a little child is capable of learning is love, and old men, when they can do nothing else, yet may love. It is that grace which is never out of season; it is that grace which will fit all sexes, all sizes, all ages, and is never out of fashion.

3. Lastly, if we take this *γάρα*, I write, as a preface to the following dehortation, it implieth the general concernment of avoiding worldly love.

1. It concerneth all sorts of Christians. The first part of that duty which the grace of God teacheth is, to 'deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts.' Self-denial, which includeth a renouncing of the world, is the first

step in the ladder of Christianity which Christ hath erected; and yet withal, it is that which even young men, and fathers, grown perfect Christians, have need to be minded of. It is very hard to walk upon snares, and not be entangled. Nor have the best Christians their conversations so in heaven, but they are apt to be enamoured with earth; and whilst they find strength to deny ungodliness, they still find cause to complain of worldly lusts. No wonder if St John write to all sorts, 'Love not the world.'

2. It concerneth all ages. Love of the world is that which begins betimes to take hold of our hearts. Little children no sooner begin to know anything, but they are taken with these present, visible, sensual objects. Young men, that are as it were entering upon the world, have much to do in it; and no marvel if they be too much taken with it; nay, which is both strange and usual, old men, though they are going out of the world, do yet cling in their affections about the world. Herein their minds resemble their bodies, which, the older they grow, still they bow down more towards the earth. One wittily compareth them to the rivers, which, the nearer they come to the sea, which is their end, the broader they are, and the more water they suck. Oh how greedy are many old men of this world, as if they were to run a new race of fourscore years longer, when they are ready to drop into the grave! *Quo minus via restat, eo plus viatici querunt*, the less way they have to go, the more provision they crave for their journey. Good reason, then, had our apostle, writing about this sin, to admonish all ages to beware of it. And thus I have given a dispatch to the second general part of this Scripture, the act performed. The last and greatest part yet remaineth to be discussed in the following discourses.

## SERMON XXXV.

*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*—1 JOHN II. 12.

IT was the peculiar prerogative of the disciples, that they were fellows of Christ's college. It is the common privilege of all Christians, that they are students in Christ's church. The studies\* wherein they are chiefly to be conversant are two, namely, of faith and repentance; how to obtain pardon of sin past, how to attain strength against sin for the future. These studies are each of them very choice and excellent, and withal of that nature that they cannot be severed. In vain doth he study for pardon who striveth not against sin, and yet it is not future obedience will satisfy for former guilt. As therefore we must be solicitous for grace, that sin may be prevented, so we

must be studious for mercy, that guilt may be absolved. To help us in both these studies, namely, to quicken our repentance, and to strengthen our faith, is the great design of our apostolical tutor in this epistle. In reference to the former, he saith in the first verse, 'These things I write to you that you sin not;' and in regard of the latter, he saith in the twelfth verse, 'I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven.'

The reasons of our apostle's writing to all Christians in general, and each age in particular, are now to be handled.

1. That with which I am to begin is the reason of his writing to the little children, the Christians in general, as it is expressed in the close of the twelfth

\* Vide Zanch. Miscell. lib. ii. de stud. Christ.

verse, 'because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.'

For the further discussion whereof, I shall consider it two ways :

As a consolatory assertion, 'your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.'

As an hortatory reason, inducing them to observe what he wrote to them, in the word *because*.

*Consid.* 1. These words, 'your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake,' contain in them an excellent comfort, a singular blessing, concerning which we are to take notice of its

Quality, *sins are forgiven.*

Propriety, *your sins.*

Efficiency, *for his name's sake.*

Of each in order, with all perspicuous brevity, beginning with,

1. The quality of the blessing here assured, forgiveness of sins. It is a subject which I have already had occasion to discourse of in the former chapter; but considering both the sweetness and the largeness of it, I could not here pass it by. Remission of sins is so sweet a comfort, that like a pleasant tune it affects the more by the iteration; and yet withal, it is a doctrine of such ample extent, that notwithstanding what hath been already said, there is somewhat still remaining to be said; yea, when I have said all I can, I must confess myself unable fully to explicate the nature of it. That I may give you a further account concerning this excellent benefit, you must know that sin is to be considered three ways: in itself, in reference to God, and to the sinner.

1. There are two things observable to our present purpose in sin absolutely considered, to wit, its essence and its property, the one whereof is constitutive, and the other consecutive, if it be allowable to make use of those phrases when we speak of a privation.

That wherein sin doth primarily consist, is the breach of the law's prescription; that which doth inseparably attend upon it, is its desert of the law's curse. Now, neither of these are properly the object of forgiveness; and the reason is plain, because it is impossible, *ex natura rei*, and such as implieth a contradiction, that a sin should not be a breach of the law, or being a breach, should not deserve the curse. Indeed, it is with the forgiven person in some respects, and as to some accounts, *quasi*, as if his sin were no sin, as if the law had never been violated, nor the penalty deserved. The breach shall not be imputed to, so as that the penalty shall be inflicted on him, but the forgiven sin is in itself as truly a sin, and as deserving of punishment, after as before. It is one thing to acquit a malefactor as not guilty, and another thing to absolve him from the punishment due to him for his guilt. When God forgiveth a sinner, he cannot (be it spoken with an holy reverence) *peccatum non peccatum facere*, make a sin to be no sin; and therefore those phrases which express forgiveness to be a taking away iniquity,

so as though sin be sought for it cannot be found; yea, a making crimson, scarlet sins to be white as snow and wool, are not to be pressed too rigidly, but construed with a *tanquam*. Sin forgiven is *as if* it had never been, and were utterly extinct.

2. In sin considered with reference to God, there are two things further to be observed, namely, the aversion from, and the offence to, God, which are its concomitants.

1. By sin we run away and wander far from God. Some of the schoolmen define it to be an aversion from the Creator to the creature, and the remedy of this is not remission but conversion. Indeed, none have their sins forgiven but they who turn from their sin to God; yet the turning a sinner from his sin, and the pardoning to a sinner his sin, are distinct acts.

2. By sin we offend and displease God. Indeed, sin being against him cannot but displease him; and being a breach of his law, must needs incur his wrath, insomuch that he is both offended with the sin, and the sinner for his sin. Now in forgiveness,

On the one hand, the offence against the sin is not removed. Not God's toleration, no, nor yet his absolution, is any approbation. God's pure nature cannot but hate sin, and that in those to whom he forgiveth it. Far be it from us to imagine that whilst God punisheth the sins of the wicked, he is well pleased with the sins of believers. Sin, in whomsoever it is, cannot but offend God's holiness.

But yet, on the other hand, the displeasure against the sinner is taken away, and every forgiven sinner is in a state of reconciliation. To this purpose it is that we find those two are joined together, *καταλλάσσω*, and *μη λογιζόμενος*, 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses;' *ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς*, and *ἔρχομεν εἰς ἡμᾶς*, Eph. i. 6, 7, 'he hath graciously accepted' us, and we 'have forgiveness of sins;' so that, sin being forgiven, the sinner is reconciled to God.

And yet this must be understood with a distinction of God's anger into judicial and paternal. When God forgiveth sin, he is no longer angry as a judge; but still he hath a fatherly anger, whereby it is that he oftentimes corrects those whom he forgiveth. True it is, those corrections which God inflicts on forgiven sinners are called judgments, but not because they are laid upon them by him as a judge (as a late writer inconsiderately glosseth), but because they are moderated with judgment; in which notion judgment is opposed to judicial anger, as appeareth by the prophet's prayer, 'O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in anger.' To this purpose it is very observable that St Paul saith, 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord;' not when we are chastened we are judged; where the *παινεύμεθα* plainly noteth the chastisement of a child by his father. So that the apostle's manifest assertion is, whatsoever judgment befalls believers for their sins, they are only the chastisements



of a Father, and so far distant from, and preventive of, the punishment of condemnation which he inflicts upon the world as a judge; and therefore we need not doubt that when the sin is forgiven, God's judicial anger is appeased.

3. Lastly, in sin considered with reference to the sinner, there are three things further observable: the spot defiling, the guilt obliging, and the punishment attending.

1. The spot or blot of sin is either in respect of the person, who is thereby deprived of that state of innocency and purity wherein before he was, or in regard of the nature, which is bereaved of that excellency and beauty which before it had. The former of these can never be taken away, it being impossible to affirm of one who hath sinned that he is an innocent person, for that were to say he is one who never sinned. Even of those who are glorified saints in heaven, it must be acknowledged that they were sinners upon earth; so that in this respect Adam, before his fall, had that innocency which cannot be attributed to those who are invested with glory. The latter of these is that which is removed, not by remission, but renovation; justification, but sanctification; and therefore till sanctification be complete, is not perfectly taken away.

2. The guilt obliging is that whereby the sinner is actually bound to undergo the punishment due to him by the law, and passed on him by the judge for the breach of it. This is that which is called by the schools the extrinsecal guilt of sin, to distinguish it from the intrinsecal, which is included in the deordination of the act, and which (as is already affirmed) is inseparable from the sin; and if you would know wherein the nature of forgiveness immediately and primarily consists, it is in the taking of this obligation, and discharging the sinner from it. Hence it is that the pardoned sinner is said not to be 'under the law,' that is, not under the curse; the sentence of condemnation belongs not to him. According to this notion, all Scripture phrases are to be construed, by which forgiveness is expressed. God, when he forgiveth sin, is said to cover them, to remember them no more, to cast them behind his back, throw them into the depth of the sea, blot them out as a cloud, hide his face, turn away his face from them; by all which expressions we are not to think that God doth not know, see, take notice of, or that seeing he is not displeased with such sins, and believers for them; but that he will not so take notice of them as to enter into judgment with the persons for them, so that the forgiven sinner is free from obligation of the punishment, as truly, as surely, as fully, as perfectly free as if he had never committed the sin, but were altogether innocent. In which regard we may say with the poet,\* *Quem penitet peccasse penè est innocens*, he that is penitent and so pardoned, is in a manner innocent, to wit, in

\* Sen. Trag.

respect of his exemption from any obligation to the curse of the law, otherwise due to him for his sin.

3. And then, which followeth upon the former, there is the punishment itself.

To open which briefly, know,

1. That punishment is a natural consequent of sin, ἀπόλοιτος τῆς ἀδικίας ἢ τιμωρία, vengeance dogs the sinner at the heels. The Hebrews by one word express both, they are so near akin: 'If thou dost ill' (saith God to Cain), Gen. iv. 7, 'sin' (that is, the punishment of sin) 'lieth at the door,' ready to seize upon thee.

2. That punishment, which is the attendant on sin, extensively reaches to all the miseries which men endure, but especially to the torments of the other world, as appeareth by the sentence denounced against the intruding guest, Mat. xxii. 12, 18, and the uncharitable servant, ver. 36, which chiefly respect the state of the damned, and contain in them allegorical descriptions of hell.

3. Finally, this punishment is not only for a time withheld, but wholly taken away when sin is forgiven. A reprieve only suspends and defers, but a pardon takes off and prevents the execution. That which is most principally the punishment, to wit, of the damned, shall never be inflicted, and whatsoever miseries and afflictions may befall a pardoned sinner, though they are materially, yet they are not formally punishments,\* because not for satisfaction of offended justice.

And thus, with what brevity this weighty point would admit, I have discovered to you the nature of this mercy; and surely by what hath been said we may easily see how precious a blessing it is, as being eminently the queen of mercies, the ocean of blessings, the quintessence of comforts, and virtually all blessings whatsoever we can stand in need of or long after. Till sin be forgiven, no good can be expected, and therefore they are put together: Hosca xiv. 3, 'Take away all iniquity, and do us good.' Either God withholds mercy, or else the mercy proveth a curse to the unpardoned sinner. Sin being forgiven, there is no evil which we need to fear: not God's wrath, not the law's curse, not Satan's malice, not hell's torments. When the angel said of Jesus, Mat. i. 21, 'He shall save his people from their sins,' he implieth salvation from all evils which are the proper effects of sin, since, according to that known maxim, *Sublatâ causâ tollitur effectus*, the cause being removed, the effects cannot but cease. And as there is no evil which we need fear, so neither is there any good which we may not hope. Zanchy observeth upon the text, that by a synecdoche forgiveness of sins is here put for all blessings. Sure I am, all good goeth along with pardoning mercy; it is not so in men's pardons. The forgiven malefactor is not therefore received into favour, or advanced to honour; but grace and glory, yea, all blessings, attend those whom God forgiveth. Indeed,

\* See this enlarged in Serm. xvii.

it is only sin which stops the current of mercy. No wonder, then, if, sin being removed, mercy flows in apace. Reconciliation to, acceptance with, God, both of our persons and services; freedom of access to the throne of grace, and a merciful audience of our prayers; supplies of all needful comforts, and a turning of all afflictions to our good; finally, the sonship now and the inheritance hereafter, do all belong to him whose sins are forgiven. Excellently Fulgentius\* to our present purpose, *Non de re parvâ disserimus, nec vile aliquid quærimus, cum de remissione peccatorum disputamus*, it is not a light matter, an unworthy subject, we discourse of, when we speak of remission of sins. By this we are freed from eternal punishment, that we may enjoy eternal bliss; by this that weight of sin which either by nature or life hath been contracted is removed, and Christ giveth ease to the weary and laden; by this the ungodly is freely justified, his faith being accounted to him for righteousness; finally, by remission of sins men are graciously differenced from those who shall be eternally tormented with, and by, the devil, and joined to those who shall eternally reign with Christ. Oh, then (according to Ferus† his pious counsel), *Hoc ipsum pro maximo dono et gratiâ repetimus*, let us esteem this the highest favour, and the greatest gift whereof we can be partakers, and withal labour we to be among that number to whom this privilege belongs. And so I am fallen on the

2. Propriety of the persons, in the word *your*. Forgiveness of sins, as you have already heard, is a great, but withal it is a special, blessing. There are some benefits which are common to elect and reprobate, good and bad. Such is that whereby God doth spare sinners, and withholdeth the execution of punishment from them: for so St Paul speaketh of goodness and forbearance to those who despise it, Rom. ii. 5. But, then, there are peculiar benefits, which are the portion only of the good so conferred on, as that they are confined to the regenerate, among which is this of forgiveness, and therefore it is said here, *your sins*.

Forgiveness of sins may be considered three ways:

1. In the decree and purpose of it, which was before the beginning of the world, from all eternity.

2. In the plenary completion and open publication of it, which shall not be till the end of the world, when time shall be no more.

3. In the particular application of it to several persons, which is time by time in this present world, and is not vouchsafed to any till they are regenerated.

To unfold this more fully, take this *your* both *exclusive* and *inclusive*, by way of restriction and enlargement: *yours*, that is, none but yours; *yours*, that is, all your sins are forgiven.

1. Yours, and none but your sins, are forgiven. This bread of life is for sons, not slaves; this kiss of love is for favourites, not rebels; this sunbeam of mercy is for the children of the day, not the night.

\* Fulgent de Remiss. peccat. lib. i. cap. iv. † Fer. in loc.

Indeed, we must distinguish between the collation and the oblation, the conferring and the offering of this benefit. Forgiveness of sins is offered to all, upon the condition of believing and repenting, but bestowed only upon them who actually believe and repent; and therefore, in the publication of this mercy, ministers must write a bill of divorce to all wicked sinners, that so (according to God's command, Jer. xxv. 10) they may 'separate the precious from the vile,' and in the application of it every one must take heed lest he too rashly, hastily, and presumptuously lay hold upon it. 'Blessed is that man (saith the psalmist, Ps. xxxii. 1) 'whose sins are forgiven'; ay, but miserable is that man who thinketh his sins forgiven when they are not; yea, he is so much the more miserable, because he thinketh himself happy. We need to be very cautelous how we pass the sentence of absolution, and you have no less reason to be careful how you apply the promises of pardon, lest a vain presumption of mercy betray you to endless misery.

2. Yours, and all your sins, are forgiven you, whether fathers, or young men, or little children; that is,

1. In a literal sense, little children, having received baptismal regeneration, are cleansed from their original sin. Young men turning to God, have the follies of their childhood pardoned; yea, to fathers repenting, the sins of their former ages shall not be mentioned.

2. In a spiritual notion, not only strong but weak Christians are capable of this benefit. 'I will remember their iniquities no more' is a branch of the new covenant, Heb. viii. 12, and truth of grace entitleth us to the covenant. Indeed, we must distinguish between the collation and the manifestation of this mercy. Christians, whilst they are but novices, are weak in faith, nor can they clearly apprehend that their sins are forgiven; but still, the benefit no less truly belongs to them than to grown saints.

As, then, before I dissuaded the wicked from presumption, so now I must warn the weak of despair. Those are too apt to lay hold upon, and these are too ready to refuse pardon; nor is it more hard to drive these from, than to draw those to eat of, this tree of life. But tell me, O drooping soul, why dost thou frowardly put that comfort far from thee which truly belongs to thee? Though thou art a stripling, yet thou art a child. Why shouldst thou distrust thy Father's clemency? True, thy weakness exposeth thee to oftener failings, but doth not debar thee from merciful indulgence, which, as it is confined only, so it is extended, to all the children of God.

3. The efficiency of the benefit cometh last to be considered, as it is expressed in those words, 'for his name's sake;' for the better explication of which I shall briefly discuss it both negatively and affirmatively.

1. Not for your own sakes. Sin is not forgiven without our desiring; God will have us ask, and seek, and knock for it. It is one of the petitions our Sa-



viour teacheth us to use in his prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses;' but still, it is without our deserving, there being nothing that is, or can be, done by us in order to forgiveness, which is in the least degree meritorious of it. Do we confess, bemoan, and forsake our sins? These are no compensations of the wrong we have offered by them to the divine Majesty; our sins deserve punishment, but our sorrow cannot satisfy for the offence; nay, could we for the future perform exact unerring obedience, it is no more than what we are bound to observe, and therefore no satisfaction for the former breaches of the law. It is not, then, anything in us which induceth God, by way of merit, to confer a pardon on us when he forgiveth sin.

2. For his name's sake: where the *ἀνομιῶν* may have a double reference, either to God or Christ; nor is it much material to whom we refer it. Indeed, inasmuch as Christ is the proximate antecedent, and withal it is usual with our apostle to speak of Christ in the third person, by one or other of these pronouns, it is most probably referred to Christ; but yet I shall take in both considerations, as being neither improbable nor unprofitable.

1. For his, that is, God's name's sake. It is that which almighty God himself asserts in this very particular by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out your iniquities for my name's sake;' and, accordingly, it is that argument by which David pleadeth with God for remission, Ps. xxv. 11, 'For thy name's sake, pardon my iniquities.' And, according to this reference, *name* may be taken in a double construction.

(1.) It is a very usual notion, by *name* to understand honour and glory. When God saith to David, 'I have made thee a name like the name of men that are in the earth;' when the church saith to God, 'Thou didst get thee a name as it is this day;' it is manifest that by *name* glory is intended. Suitable to this it is that famous men are called by the Hebrews, אַנְשֵׁי הַשֵּׁם, Gen. vi. 4, and by the Latins, *virī nominum*, men of name, in which sense the poet adorneth it with these epithets,

'Magnum et memorabile nomen,'

of great and memorable. Thus, when God forgiveth sin, he doth it for his name's sake, that is, for his own honour and glory. Indeed, God's own glory is the ultimate end of all his actions. As he is the first, so is he the last, the efficient, and the final cause; nor is any thing done *by him* which is not *for him*. The end of our actions must be his glory, because both our being and working is from him; but the end of his work is his own glory, because his being and acting is of and from himself.

Among all divine works, there is none which more setteth forth his glory than this of remission. Sin, by committing it, brings God a great deal of dishonour, and yet, by forgiving it, God raiseth to himself a great deal of honour. 'It is the glory of a man,' and

much more of God, 'to pass by an offence;' as acts of power, so acts of grace, are exceeding honourable. The attributes of God's grace, mercy, goodness, clemency, shine forth in nothing so much as in pardoning sins. St Paul speaketh of riches of goodness which attend God's forbearance; how much greater riches must there needs be in forgiveness? Nay, indeed, God hath so ordered the way of pardon, that not only the glory of his mercy, but justice, yea, of his wisdom in the wonderful contemperation of both these, is very illustrious. *Nomen quasi notamen, quia notificat*, the name is that which maketh one known; and by remission of sins, God maketh known his choice and glorious attributes; and for this end it is that he vouchsafeth it.

It is a consideration that may be our consolation. Since God forgiveth sins for his name's sake, he will be ready to forgive many sins, as well as few, great as small; indeed, the more and greater our sins are, the greater is the forgiveness, and, consequently, the greater is God's glory: and therefore David, upon this consideration of God's name and glory, maketh the greatness of his iniquity a motive of forgiveness, Ps. xxv. 11. Indeed, to run into gross sins, that God may glorify himself by forgiving them, is an odious presumption, but to hope that those gross sins we have run into may, and will, be forgiven by God to us, being truly penitent, for his name's sake, is a well-grounded expectation, and such as may support our spirits against the strongest temptations to despair.

2. By God's *name* in Scripture is sometimes understood his word. When David saith, Ps. exix. 55, 132, 'I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night;' and again, 'Look upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto them that love thy name;' no doubt we are most congruously to understand by it God's word, of which he discourseth throughout the psalm. And, indeed, so primarily doth this title of *name* agree to the word, that the psalmist saith to God, Ps. cxxxviii. 2, 'Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name,' and in this acceptance the sense is, that God forgiveth sins for his word's sake. He hath been pleased to oblige himself by promise, which he cannot falsify, to pardon the sins of his children, in which respect, our apostle saith in the former chapter, 1 John i. 9, 'He is faithful to forgive; and indeed, both these acceptions of name are involved, one with the other; since God forgiveth sins for his word's sake, because his glory is concerned in making good his word.

2. For his, that is, Christ's name's sake; and thus there is again a double construction of the word *name*, to wit, for person and for power.

1. *Name* is sometimes taken for the person. Thus, where it is said, 'The number of the Christians was an hundred and twenty names,' Acts i. 15; and again, 'Thou hast a few names in Sardis,' Rev. ii. 3, it is manifestly meant of persons. Suitable to this is that

of the poet, *Nomina magna*, for great persons; and often in Livy, *Nomen Latinum, Romanum*, for a Latin, a Roman. And thus, frequently in Scripture, the name of the Lord and Christ is as much as God and Christ. Calling upon the Lord, is sometimes expressed by 'calling on the name of the Lord;' and blessed be the Lord, by 'blessed be the name of the Lord,' Joel ii. 32, Job i. 21. When St Peter saith, Acts iv. 12, 'There is no name under heaven but the name of Christ,' he explaineth it in the preceding clause of the person, 'neither is there salvation in any other;' and when Christ, Mark ix. 37, speaketh of 'forsaking houses, land for his name's sake,' of being 'hated of all men for his name's sake,' of 'receiving his little ones for his name's sake,' it is as much as for his sake. In this sense we may take it here, and it lets us see in and through whom remission is vouchsafed; namely, in and through Christ. Commission of sin came in by the first Adam, and remission by the second. So St Paul expressly, Eph. i. 11, 'In whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins;' and again, chap. iv. 32, 'God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'

2. *Name* is very frequently taken for power and strength. 'In thy name' (that is, by thy power) 'we will tread down our enemies,' saith the church, Ps. xlv. 5. 'I come against thee in the name' (that is, in the might) 'of the Lord of hosts,' so David to Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 45. 'In the name' (that is, in the strength) 'of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk,' saith the apostle to the cripple, Acts iii. 6. Finally, 'In my name' (that is, in my might, saith Christ) 'they shall cast out devils,' Mat. xvi. 17. In this sense it may well be rendered here, and so the meaning is, that through the virtue and power of Christ this benefit of remission is obtained: so Carthusian \* glosseth, *virtute et merito Christi*, by the virtue and merit of Christ. Indeed, there is a double power in Christ procuring forgiveness: the one of merit, and that is in his passion, which satisfied God's justice for our sins; the other of intertreaty, and that is in his intercession, which pleadeth with God for sinners. By the one, remission is purchased for, and by the other, it is applied to, us. For his name's sake, for the merit of that blood which he shed, by the efficacy of that intercession which he ever maketh, our sins are forgiven, both which I have already had occasion to discuss.

To wind it up, therefore,

1. In a sorrowful sense of our manifold sins, learn we,

1. To call on, to ask in the name of Christ for this mercy, of forgiveness. It was the assurance our Saviour gave his disciples, and in them us, that 'whatsoever they did ask the Father in his name should be given to them.' Whenever, then, we put up any prayer to God, and especially this petition for

\* Carthus. in loc.

remission, let us be sure to present it in Christ's name. It was in Esau's name that Jacob got the blessing, so must we this blessing of pardon in Christ's name.

To trust in this name of Christ, as that which will undoubtedly procure our pardon. 'The name of the Lord,' saith Solomon, Prov. xviii. 10, 'is a strong tower; the righteous run unto it (to wit, for protection), and are safe.' The name of Christ, may I say, is a strong tower, and the sinners, penitent sinners, run to it (to wit, for remission) and are glad. 'Through his name,' saith the apostle Peter concerning Christ, Acts x. 43, 'whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' All other props are bruised reeds, only the name of Christ is a strong buckler to them who trust on it. Indeed, whatever confidence is placed on God himself, his merciful and gracious nature, for remission of sins, if it be not with reference to Christ's name and merit, it will prove but a vain hope, since there is no mercy to be expected from God, but only through Christ; and surely, much more vain will all that confidence prove, which is built upon the rotten foundation of our own righteousness, which is so far from being available to procure the forgiveness of our sins, that itself hath those sins accompanying it which need to be forgiven.

2. In a comfortable sense of the remission of our sins, learn we to give unto Christ the glory due to his name. *Per cujus nomen*, saith the father\* upon the text, Through whose name are your sins forgiven? Through the name of Austin or Donatus? No. Who is Augustine? or who is Donatus? Nor yet through the name of Paul or Peter, but only the name of Christ; and therefore, not to us, not to us, O blessed Jesus, not to our prayers or tears, not to our confessions or good works, but to thy name and merit, be the glory of this grace whereby our sins are forgiven.

*Consid.* 2. Having given you this account of the first consideration of the words, to wit, as they are a consolatory assertion, it remaineth that I now proceed in a few words to the other, which is,

As they are an hortatory reason; for so much the causal particle implieth, 'I write to you, *because* your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake;' and here we shall take in the threefold reference of the act.

1. I write this whole epistle, the chief scope whereof is to persuade holiness of life, because for Christ's sake your sins are forgiven. God's mercy in remitting sin should not make us the more licentious in committing sin; because our old score is wiped off, far be it from us to encourage ourselves to run upon a new one; no, rather, since God for Christ's sake is so gracious as to wash away our former sins, we should be the more watchful lest we defile ourselves again. What servant will not in reason think himself obliged to serve his master so much the more faithfully, when he hath passed over his former negli-

\* Aug. in loc.



gence, riot, and dishonesty? And is not the case the same between God and us? It is true, with ill-minded and perverse natures, the forgiving of past injuries is an invitation to another, but that which clemency leads to, and works upon an ingenuous spirit, is a care not to offend any more.

2. I write to dissuade you from the love of the world, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake; *Pudent quod factum infectum reddere*, so Beza. Why should you ungratefully undo what God hath mercifully done? Those sins are remitted to you which, whilst you loved the world, were admitted by you. Oh take heed that you do not forfeit your pardon by running into the same sins again; *Vos amate dimissorem iniquitatum vestrarum*, so St Austin, you are bound to love him who hath forgiven you your sins. So our Saviour saith of Mary Magdalene, Luke vii. 47, 'Much was forgiven her, for' (which is no doubt there as much as *therefore*) 'she loved much.' And *Quomodo poterimus amare Deum si amamus mundum?* How can we love God if we love the world? Can the world do that for us which Christ hath done? It draweth you into many sins, but it cannot obtain the pardon of one sin. Oh, then, shall we not adhere to Christ, for whose sake our sins are forgiven, and forego the world?

3. Lastly, and principally, I write to you this commandment of loving your brother, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. Indeed, it is that which this argument presseth in three several ways.

(1.) In a way of imitation, the brethren are God's darlings. He loveth all men so far as to forbear them, but he loveth them so as to forgive them; and surely fit it is that where God forgiveth we should, and whom he loveth we should. Besides, God loveth us so as to forgive us, and forgiving, to give all blessings to us, and shall not we be merciful, and kind, and loving to one another after his pattern?

(2.) In a way of gratulation, thus Naogorgens urgeth it.\* So great a benefit as forgiveness, *facile persuadet*

\* Naogorg. in loc.

*ut ei benefaciamus*, strongly persuadeth that we should return somewhat to him who, and for whose sake, we are forgiven. *Non Christo quidem sed membris*, this we cannot to him in himself, but in his members; *quibus ille jussit*, to whom he hath commanded us to shew our affections. Indeed, the good Christian cannot but thus reason with himself: If God hath, at my request, forgiven me pounds and given me talents, shall not I, at his command, forgive my brother pence, and give him mites? That love he hath shewed to me is infinitely surpassing that love which he expected I should shew to my brother. So that it is impossible for him who is truly affected with his Father's goodness not to be inflamed with brotherly kindness. As therefore the cold stone or iron being warmed by the fire casts forth and reflects that heat which it hath received upon that which is adjacent to it, so doth the sincere Christian reflect the heat of God's love which is shed abroad in his heart, and sheds it abroad in love to his brethren.

(3.) In a way of impetration. The comfort of this benefit of forgiveness lieth in the knowledge of it. Indeed, whosoever hath his sins forgiven is really, but he only who is assured they are forgiven is sensibly, blessed. A well-grounded assurance cannot be obtained but by finding those graces wrought in us which accompany remission, amongst which this of brotherly love is not the least. If I can justly say that I love my brother for his name's sake, then, and not till then, I can comfortably say, My sins are forgiven for his name's sake. When therefore we find these passions of hatred, envy, malice, and uncharitableness to boil in our hearts against others for those injuries which either they have, or at least we conceive they have, offered to us, what better antidote can we use than a serious meditation of God's free and full, undeserved and immeasurable, love towards us, notwithstanding our manifold sins against him? Which that we may duly imitate, for which that we may be truly thankful, and of which that we may be comfortably assured, it concerneth us; and accordingly St John writeth to us to love the brethren.

## SERMON XXXVI.

*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*—1 JOHN II. 13, 14.

**P**HILOSOPHY not unfitly distinguisheth of a three-fold natural life: vegetative, sensitive, rational. The first discovereth itself by growth and augmentation, the second by motion and sensation, the third by discourse and ratiocination. The first is only in plants, the first and second in beasts, all three in man.

Nor would it be passed by how man doth as it were gradually put forth these several lives: living in the womb the life of growth, so soon as he cometh into the world the life of sense, and after the expiration of some years beginning to live the life of reason.

And as thus there are three lives, so there are three

ages of man's life, which are to be reckoned from that time he begins to act as a man, and make use of his reason, namely, childhood, youth, old age. Our life is a day, whereof childhood is the morning, youth the noon, and old age the evening, after which succeedeth the night of death. Our life is a journey, which consisteth of three stages: childhood, wherein we go up hill; youth, in which we run forward; and old age, in which we run down hill to the grave. Finally, our childhood is as a budding spring, our youth as a flourishing summer, our old age as a withering autumn, after which followeth the winter of death. With all these our apostle hath here to do; and as every one of them is capable of instruction, he directeth his writing to them, not only jointly, but severally, in the words now read: 'I write to you, fathers, because ye have known,' &c.

The particular reasons why our apostle wrote to every one of these ages, do yet remain to be discussed; and before I enter upon them in particular, there are two things I will briefly premise.

1. That two of them are repeated, namely, that which respects fathers and young men, whereas that to little children is only once mentioned; and if we well view it, we shall find there might be good cause for the iteration of them, and so no need to blame the scribe, as if the fourteenth verse were heedlessly added.

Besides that one, namely, that which concerneth young men, is not a naked repetition, but withal an amplification; there is a double reason may be assigned why he writeth to fathers and young men twice, and but once to children.

(1.) Because his discourse was principally intended for fathers [and] young men. Look as in our preachings, though sometimes occasionally we instruct little children, yet we must frequently direct our discourse to those who are drawn up to years of discretion; so no doubt our apostle designed this epistle for, and therefore directeth his writing to, the young and old Christians.

(2.) Because the things about which our apostle writeth are such which young men and fathers have more need to be minded of than little children. There is not so great danger of little children's being infected with the world, because they know not what belongs to it; whereas young men, having so much employments in, are apt to be entangled with, the world; and old men, having been so long acquainted with, cannot easily wean their affections from, it.\* Little children are not so sensible of injuries, and therefore not so apt to be enraged with hatred as young men and fathers are. No marvel if he write again and again inculcating the argument, by which he would persuade them to love their brother, and dissuade them from the love of the world.

2. That all of them are laudatory characters, com-

\* Zanch. in loc.

mending that good which he observed in them: the fathers for their knowledge of Christ, the young men for their victory and spiritual strength, and the little children for their knowledge of the Father; a fit pattern for all ministers, for all superiors, yea, for all, to follow. Indeed, to flatter bad men in their sins is abominable. God pronounceth a curse against such prophets who 'daub with untempered mortar,' and by their smooth language strengthen the hands of evil-doers; but to commend good men for their graces is commendable, and hath not only the pattern of the apostle, but of Christ and God himself, to warrant it.

The truth is, praise is a due debt to virtue, and therefore it is an act of justice. It is not unfitly observed, that our apostle joineth these two together, Philip. iv. 7, 'If there be any virtue, if there be any praise,' to intimate that praise ought to attend on virtue. Nor is it only a debt, but a spur, and therefore an act of prudence. When a good man is commended, others are encouraged, and *si non amore virtutis, at dilectione laudis accenduntur*;\* many have been allured with the love of praise, whom the love of virtue could not persuade. However, the person himself being commended is thereby animated; nor is it unlawful for men to be moved in a subordinate way with a desire of praise, and much respect. St Bernard, upon those words in the Proverbs, 'Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee,' saith,† *potest in hoc loco non incongrue mellis nomine favor humana laudis intelligi*, in this place by honey may be understood not unfitly the favour of human praise; *meritoque non ab omni sed ab immoderato edulio prohibemur*, nor are we prohibited all, but only an immoderate desire of glory. No wonder, then, if the ministers of Christ, whom he hath appointed fishers of men, among others make use of this bait of praise, that commendation may make way for their commands, and a *well done* may encourage their auditors to do better. This no doubt was the design of St John, that by this artifice of praise his instructions might have the stronger influence upon them to whom he writeth.

Come we now to the several reasons by which he bespeaketh the several ages.

1. The first respects the aged fathers to whom he wrote, because they 'knew him who was from the beginning,' as it is expressed in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses.

In haudling of this character, I shall consider the goodness and the fitness of it: the goodness of it in itself, by inquiring what it meaneth; and the fitness of it, both to the subjects to whom, and the objects about which, our apostle wrote.

1. Consider we this character in itself, and we shall find it not only good but excellent. Indeed, in this one there are two characters, to wit, of Christ and the Christian, which offer themselves to our view:

\* Gr. Mag. Mor.

† Bern. Sermon. 47. ex parv.



of Christ, that he is 'from the beginning;' of the Christian, that he 'knoweth him who is from the beginning.' Of each in order.

1. Our apostle here affirmeth concerning Christ, that he is from the beginning. Indeed, Illyricus refers this to God,\* who is said to be 'from everlasting to everlasting,' and to 'inhabit eternity;' and is called by Clemens Alexandrinus,† *ἀίδιος γήρων* and *τῶν ἄνωγων πρεσβύτατος*, the most ancient of all things, because before all things, yea, the Creator. And suitably Plato, putting the question, What is the most ancient thing? answereth, God. But I conceive it is most suitable to the apostle's scope to understand it, with Calvin, Aretius, and the most, nay, best interpreters,‡ of Christ. And thus (as Zanchy well observeth) this may be asserted of him in a double respect, *quoad virtutem salvificam*, and *quoad personam*, in respect of virtual efficacy and personal subsistence.

1. Christ is from the beginning, to wit, ordained and purposed to be the mediator of his church; in which sense he is called, Rev. xiii. 8, 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' Whence it is that though he died in the fulness of time, yet the virtue of his death, as it extendeth forward to the end, so backward to the beginning of the world.

2. But principally, Christ is said to be from the beginning, inasmuch as his subsistence is from eternity; to wit, in respect, not of his human, but divine nature. Thus St Austin appositely,§ *novus Christus in carne, sed antiquus in divinitate*, Christ as to his manhood is new, but as to his Godhead ancient; and Œcumenius|| expressly, *τις δὲ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, εἰ μὴ ὁ Θεός, λόγος*, who is it that is from the beginning but God the Word? John i. 1. In this respect justly is the Messiah called by the prophet Isaiah, the everlasting Father, Isa. ix. 6; and the prophet Micah saith of him who was to be born in Bethlehem, that 'his goings forth had been of old from everlasting,' Micah v. 3. Upon this account the author to the Hebrews asserts him to be 'yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. Where, saith Anselm,¶ by *yesterday* is denoted the time past, and the vast space of eternity preceding; by *to-day*, the time present; and by *for ever*, that which is to come. Finally, unto this that metaphorical character which our apostle giveth of Christ, Rev. i. 12, is plainly to be referred, where he saith, 'his head (that is, his divinity, so Pererius\*\*) 'and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow,' to which,†† in regard of its antiquity; for so Daniel, calling God the Ancient of days, presently addeth, 'the hair of his head was like pure wool,' Dan. vii. 9, namely, for whiteness, which is the badge of old age. Not to enlarge upon this point, because it is only collateral

in the text, I shall in a few words discuss these two propositions, which are plainly intimated in this clause, and clearly expressed in Scripture:

1. That Jesus Christ had a being before he was born of the Virgin Mary. Indeed, he then began to be man, but he did not then begin to be, when his mother conceived and brought him forth into the world. It was our blessed Saviour's positive assertion concerning himself, 'Before Abraham was I am,' John viii. 58; and if he had a being before Abraham, certainly he did not begin to be when he was made man. That this was the meaning of our Saviour, is clear, in that it is returned by him as an answer to the Jews' objection, which is manifestly drawn from the short date of his personal existence, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?' To which Christ's words cannot be a full answer, if they intend not that he had a personal being before Abraham, and so no wonder if Abraham were known to him; and that the Jews so understood him is evident, in that they 'took up stones to cast at him,' as conceiving him a blasphemer in so saying; upon which account the father saith excellently,\* *Eecce Judæi intellexerunt quod non intelligunt Ariani*, behold, the Jews understood that which the Arians will not, but fondly and impiously endeavour to obscure. Very considerable upon this account is that of St Paul, Philip. ii. 6, 7, where he saith that 'being' (or according to the force of the *ὑπαρχων*), 'subsisting in the form of God, he took upon him the form of a servant;' whence it plainly followeth, that before he took upon him the form of a servant, he had a subsistence. It is not unworthy our observation to this purpose, that Christ, when he was incarnate, is said to 'come down from heaven,' and to 'come forth from the Father;' whereby is manifestly implied, that before his incarnation, he was in heaven, and in the bosom of his Father. Thus, when we read, 'The Word was made flesh,' John i. 14, and 'God sent his Son into the world,' Gal. iv. 4, it is evident that he was the Word and the Son before, else how could he be capable of assuming flesh, and being sent into the world. It is a clear maxim, nothing can be predicated of nothing; so that if he were not at all, till he was made flesh and sent, it could not be predicated of him that he was made flesh, or that he was sent by the Father.

2. But further, that being which Jesus Christ had before his incarnation was, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, from the beginning, which we cannot better expound than by that ἐν ἀρχῇ, 'in the beginning,' which we meet with in the Gospel; and so the sense is, that when the world began to be, Christ was, and so consequently from eternity, because before all time.

Express to this purpose is that prayer of our Saviour, John xvii. 5, 'Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;' the genuine plain doctrine

\* Aug. in Joh Tract. 48.

\* Illyr. in loc.

† Cl. Al. Pæd. lib. ii. cap. iii.

‡ Calv., Aret., Zanch. in loc.

§ Aug. in loc.

|| Œcumen. ib.

¶ Anselm. ibid.

\*\* Perer. ibid.

†† Qu. 'to wit'?—Ed.

whereof is, that Christ had a glory (and therefore a co-existence) with his Father before the world was. I am not ignorant how that Samosatenean and Socinian heretics interpret this only of God's eternal purpose to glorify his Son, after he had finished his work upon earth. And truly it is worth our noting, how absurdly these pretended masters of reason construe, as others, so this scripture; whilst they would have us to believe, that when Christ positively saith, he had this glory with his Father before the world was, he only meaneth by it, that his Father decreed before the world was he should have this glory; and so that which is averred of actual possession must only signify an intentional preparation, when yet it had been as easy for Christ to have said (if he had meant no more) the glory which thou hast prepared for me before the world was; yea, whenas both Christ and his apostles, where they would express the decree of glory, still use the phrases of prepared, and laid up, and such like, Mat. xxv. 34.

No less doth it tend to the confirmation of this truth, that the evangelist saith concerning Christ, 'All things are made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made;' and therefore St Paul, having asserted that 'all things were created by him and for him,' Col. i. 5, presently addeth, 'and he is before all things.' Indeed, as Tertullian strongly argueth,\* *non potuit carere substantiâ, quod tantas substantias fecit*, he that gave being to all things could not himself want a being; and if all creatures receive their essence and existence from him, he must needs be before them. It would not be passed by to what a shift the forenamed heretics are put to, for evading the force of these texts, whilst they would expound the making and creating all things to be the making of new men, and the creating of a Christian church; for besides that the apostle manifestly speaketh not only of persons (to whom the new creation belongs), but things, yea, all things whatsoever; and therefore the evangelist joineth a negative to the affirmative, 'without him nothing;' and St Paul maketh a distribution of the *all* into 'things visible and invisible, in heaven and earth,' whereby it appeareth the first creation is intended; it would yet further be considered, that the evangelist and apostle speak of this making and creation as a thing already past, yea, as the context in the Gospel sheweth, done in the beginning, which compared with Moses his *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*, appeareth to be the beginning of the world; whereas the new creation was then, nay, is still, but *in fieri*, not *in facto*, nor shall be finished till the end of the world.

To end this, let the meditation hereof confirm us in the faith of our Saviour's deity, which must necessarily follow upon the preceding doctrine; for if Christ is so *from*, as that he was *before* the beginning

\* Tertul. in Prax.

of the world, and so is eternal, he can be no other than the true Jehovah, the most high God: eternity being one of those incommunicable attributes of the Deity, which cannot in its proper and adequate notion be predicated of anything besides or below the Godhead. And so much shall suffice to be spoken of the character which is here given of Christ. Pass we on to the,

2. Character by which the aged Christians to whom our apostle writeth are described; and that is, that they 'know him which was from the beginning.' What it is to know Christ, I had occasion heretofore to discuss, and therefore shall not insist upon it; only be pleased in brief to take notice,

That there is a threefold knowledge of him who is from the beginning, comprehensive, intuitive, and apprehensive.

1. The comprehensive knowledge is that which is peculiar to himself; he who is from the beginning, can only know himself from the beginning. Indeed, it is impossible for any finite creature to comprehend the infinite eternity of Christ; himself, as man, could not comprehensively know himself as God.

2. The intuitive knowledge of Christ in his person, natures, offices, is reserved for glory, when we shall see him as he is, so far as created nature is capable of.

3. That which then is here meant is an apprehensive knowledge, whereby it is we are enlightened to discern the excellency of Christ, together with the need we stand in of, and benefit we receive by, him. That expression which we find used by St Paul, Eph. iii. 19, 'To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,' is seemingly contradictory, but easily reconciled by this distinction; as Christ, so his love 'passeth knowledge,' because the infiniteness of it is incomprehensible; and yet we both may, and ought to know, that is, in some measure to apprehend, the love of Christ to us.

Now, this apprehensive knowledge is either *nuda* or *conjuncta*,\* naked, only situate in the understanding, when we know what Christ is, and what he hath done, or else such as is conjoined with faith, love, obedience; so to know him as to trust him, to prize him, to embrace him, and to obey him.

This is that knowledge which, as it is here the commendation, so ought to be the endeavour, of every Christian. Indeed, knowledge, considered absolutely, is a rare and precious endowment, and that which a rational nature cannot but set an high value upon, and industriously seek after. Of all the trees of the garden, none more desirable than that of knowledge; such is its magical sweetness, that we cannot but fall in love with it. What made the queen of Sheba come from far to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but that she might gain knowledge? Indeed, what light is to the eye, that is knowledge to the mind, not only delightful, but necessary; for as the eye cannot see without

\* Est. in loc.



light, so neither can the mind judge and discern of things without knowledge.

Knowledge at large is very amiable, but especially in reference to this object, in comparison of which all other knowledge is nothing worth. I may here very well allude to that of the wise man, Prov. xxxi. 29, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou surmountest them all.' There are several kinds of knowledge, and all of them delectable, but this transcendeth them all; no logic like to the knowledge of him who is ὁ λόγος, the divine reason. The science of the stars is pleasing, but far short of the knowledge of this 'Star of Jacob,' the 'Sun of righteousness;' the skill of lapidaries is choice, but the knowledge of this 'pearl of great price' is far above it. Finally, to know antiquities is very desirable, but much more to 'know him that is from the beginning.'

Let, then, no knowledge content us without this, and let us seek after this, though we want other knowledge. Indeed, it is the excellency of this knowledge, that whereas, *ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius*, every man is not fit to make a scholar, nor are some brains capable of all arts and sciences, this knowledge is that to which every man may, and ought, to attain in some measure; and therefore wisdom inviteth the simple to turn into her school. Indeed (which is, though a riddle, yet truth), it is oftentimes seen that mean, vulgar, ignorant persons are better versed in the experimental saving knowledge of Christ than great rabbis and learned doctors.

Let, then, none despair, but all endeavour after this knowledge; and whilst some are for the earthly knowledge of secular affairs, others for the watery knowledge of human arts, and others content themselves with an airy speculation of divine things, let us labour for a fiery knowledge of Christ, which may not only enlighten our minds, but warm our affections, so as to make him who is from the beginning the end of all our desires, endeavours, the whole and sole object of our trust, and love, and service.

2. By this time you have seen somewhat of the goodness of this character. Proceed we now to consider the fitness of it, and that in a double reference, to the subjects, and the objects of our apostle's writing.

1. To the persons to whom he writeth, namely, fathers, old men. It is that which I shall here once for all take notice of, that the characters here specified are such as belong to Christians of all ages;\* fathers, as well as young men, must be strong, and overcome the wicked one; young men, as well as fathers, must know him that is from the beginning; fathers and young men, as well as little children, must know the Father: but yet, withal, there is a peculiar aptitude in each of the characters to the several ages he mentioneth. This is eminently observable in this which is here given to the fathers; for

1. *Senibus competit notitia*,† the act of knowing

\* Calv. in loc.

† Est. in loc.

here specified is such as in a special manner belongs to old men: 'With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding,' so Eliphaz, Job xii. 12, in which respect the ancient and the prudent are joined together, Isa. iii. 2. *Tum denique animus scientiâ floret, cum corpus temporis longinquitate marcessit*, saith Damascene in his parallels,\* old men have oftentimes flourishing minds in withering bodies; and, to use the philosopher's phrase,† the eye of their soul is quick-sighted, when their corporal eyes are dull. For this reason it is that, as Quintilian observeth, *militem eligimus juvenem, imperatorem senem*, a soldier should be young, but a general old; and that city is said to be happy where there are *consilia senum* and *hasta juvenum*, old counsellors and young warriors. Knowledge, though not always, yet for the most part, goeth on three legs, and seeth with four eyes: and it was a true saying of a learned divine,‡ a few gray hairs will do more work than many young locks; and surely, then, St John could not give a fitter commendation of these fathers than that they were endued, *non vulgari prudentiâ*, with divine knowledge.

2. *Præcipuum est ætate protectiori antiquiora nosse*, old men are versed in the knowledge of ancient things, and therefore it is they love to discourse of things done long ago, and beyond the cognisance of those who are younger than themselves. This, then, must needs highly commend these fathers, that their knowledge looked as far as the beginning, namely, to 'him who is from the beginning,' or, if with some you will refer the ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, from the beginning, to the act that their knowledge of him was not as yesterday, but from the beginning of their life they had been trained up in the knowledge of Christ.

And now, I would to God there were no cause of turning this commendation into condemnation. 'I said days should speak, and multitudes of years teach wisdom,' said Elihu of Job's friends, Job xxxiii. 7. Indeed, so it should be, but how seldom is it so; whilst many who have multitudes of years, instead of speaking and teaching, have need to hear and learn divine wisdom; διαφέρει τοῦ νηπίου καθ' ἡλικίαν οὐδεν ὁ ἐν ταῖς φρέσι νηπιάζων; he that is a child of understanding little differeth from a child in years, saith Basil the great: § and, alas, how many fathers are in that sense children! *Turpis et ridicula res est senex elementaris*,|| how ridiculous a sight is an old man going to school! and yet how many old men have need to learn the A B C of Christianity. How fitly may I apply to such that rebuke of the author to the Hebrews, chap. v. 10, 'For the time they have had, they might have been teachers, and yet they need to be taught the rudiments of religion.' It was the complaint of St Bernard concerning many old men in his time,¶ I wish it were not too suitable to ours, *Caput canum, cor earum, facies*

\* Damasc. parallel, l. i. c. 38.

§ Bas. M. hom. xxiv.

† Socrat. in Symp. Plut.

¶ Sen. de Tranquil. l. i. c. 3.

‡ Mr Gataker.

¶ Bern. in loc.

*nugosa, lingua nugosa*; notwithstanding their gray heads, and wrinkled faces, they have frothy tongues, and empty hearts. Oh, how many are there who do *senescere*, and yet both *se et Christum nescire*, are ignoramuses, knowing neither Christ nor themselves; perhaps, indeed, they have attained some dexterous knowledge in the things of this life, they are well skilled to get and keep their gold, heap up wealth; but, alas, they have not yet learned what treasures of grace and wisdom are in Christ. For one man that liveth to be old, how many die young! and for one old man that knoweth Christ savingly, how many are altogether unacquainted with him! Indeed, if you question their faith, you shall find them very strong in confidence of being saved by Christ; and yet, if you examine their knowledge, you shall find them ignorant of that Christ by whom they believe to be saved. Solomon saith, Eccles. iv. 13, 'A poor wise child is better than an old and foolish king:' will not many knowing children rise up in judgment one day against ignorant fathers, whilst a child of ten years old shall give a better account of Christian religion than some old men of sixty? I know not whether I shall chide or weep, declaim against the folly, or bewail the misery of such old men, when I consider the dismal threatening uttered by St Paul, 2 Thes. i. 8, that 'God will come in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know him not;' and which will certainly render the account of these old men the greater, and vengeance hotter, who live within the pale of the church, in that they have not only had time, but means and opportunity of gaining this heavenly knowledge, but they neglect them.

Oh then, you fathers, receive a word of admonition; though whilst you were young men you were careless of divine things, yet now surely it is time to look after them. It is one of St Cyprian's horrid abuses,\* *si sine religione senex esse inveniantur*, for an old man to be irreligious, and a stranger to heavenly things. You are almost at the end of your days; oh labour to know him which is from the beginning. Your natural life, through God's goodness, is prolonged; ay, but it must at length be ended. Let nothing content you without the 'knowledge of the true God and his Son Jesus Christ,' which is eternal life, John xvii. 3. Why should you be as bad apprentices, that, having served seven years, are still to learn their trades; hear so much, and so long, and yet know so little of Christ? Assure yourselves, the only comforts of old age are *conscientia bene peractæ vitæ, et scientia Christi experimentalis*, the conscience of a well-led life, when you are able to reckon not only days and years, but good works done in those days, and filling up those years, and chiefly the experimental knowledge of Christ, whereby, as good old Simcon, you embrace him in your arms. This will be both your comfort and your honour, 'an hoary head being a crown when it is

\* Cyp. abus. grad.

found in a way of righteousness' and knowledge. As, then, God is pleased to add to your days, do you add to your knowledge; and though old age cause your strength of body to cease, yet strive that [your] souls may more and more increase in this and all other graces of the Holy Spirit.

2. There is yet another fitness which would be considered in this character, and that is in reference to the matter about which he writeth, especially the precedent and subsequent doctrines; that thereby we may see what influence the right knowledge of Christ hath upon those excellent duties of contempt of the world, and love of the brethren.

1. Because you have known him which is from the beginning, love not the world. It is that which may very well be urged upon a double account, by an argument drawn,

1. *Ab indecoro*. It is a very unbeseeming thing for you, who have known him that is from the beginning, and been so long scholars in Christ's school, to love the world. That they who know no better should soar no higher, it is no wonder; and therefore if heathens, pagans, infidels, should be earthly-minded, it is no more than what is to be expected; but for them who know Christ, and knowing him, cannot but know what an excellency there is in him, and what a vanity there is in the world, to doat upon it, is very incongruous. A Bristol stone is very glorious in his eyes who never saw a diamond, but he would be deservedly accounted stupid who should prefer a Bristol stone before a diamond. All Christians, especially aged ones, cannot but experimentally know Christ's fulness and the world's emptiness; and, therefore, it must needs be a very irrational affection in them to love the world.

2. *A contrario*. The knowledge of him that is from the beginning, and the love of these things that have both beginning and ending, are contrary to, and so inconsistent one with another; and the reason is plain, because (as hath been already intimated) the true knowledge of Christ is inseparably attended with love to him, *ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαπᾶσαι τὸ ἐρᾶν*, loving is caused by seeing, where the object is amiable; Christ is altogether lovely, so that it is impossible to see him and not to love him. The orator saith of virtue, that it is so desirable, that if men could with bodily eyes behold it, they would be ravished with it. Sure I am, he that with spiritual eyes beholds Christ, cannot but be enamoured with him. Now the world must needs be vile to him to whom Christ is precious; if the knowledge of Christ attract us to him, it cannot but wean us from the world; so that whosoever professeth to know Christ, and loveth the world, he giveth his profession the lie, and plainly discovereth his knowledge to be such, which, though it have light, hath no heat, and is none of that knowledge which Christianity calls for.

2. Because you have known him which is from the beginning, love the brethren; and this likewise is



that which may be strongly pressed by a double enforcement.

1. *Ab objecto.* The knowledge of him who is from the beginning carrieth with it a knowledge of that love which he had from the beginning toward us, and did manifest in the fulness of time to us, and no such obligation to love; as love, of our love to the brethren, as Christ's love to us. It is very observable how St Paul, Eph. v. 2, persnading to walk in this path of brotherly love, doth not only direct but incite to it by Christ's example, 'But walk in love, as Christ hath loved us.' Indeed, he that knoweth the love of Christ, cannot but be in some measure sensible how free and how full it is; and surely that love which is both *sine merito* and *sine modo* (to use St Bernard's phrase), both undeserved and unmeasurable, may well engage to a return of love, in whatsoever way he who hath so loved us should expect and direct it.

2. *Ab effectu.* Inasmuch as brotherly love is, though not an immediate, yet a genuine effect of the knowledge of Christ, the account whereof take briefly thus: Our brethren (to wit) by grace are Christ's brethren; and if we love Christ, we cannot but love his rela-

tions. All Christian brethren have the image of Christ stamped upon them, and if we love Christ we cannot but love his image; where, then, there is a true and sincere affection to Christ, there cannot but be a love of the brethren; and where there is a saving knowledge of Christ, there (as hath been already manifested) cannot but be a sincere love to him.

That, therefore, it may appear our knowledge of Christ is not merely notional, but experimental, such a knowledge of him as is accompanied with a sense of his love to us, not barely speculative, but practical; such a knowledge of him as is attended with our love to him, let us shew it by love to our brethren.

To close up this discourse, it is an excellent advice of St Jerome, *discite eam scientiam in terris, cujus cognitio perseverat in calis*, seek after that knowledge on earth which will persevere in heaven. Let us now begin, and not only begin, but according to St Peter's counsel, 'grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is from the beginning,' which shall be consummated in the end, when we shall enjoy that beatifical vision which shall need no increase, and know no end.

## SERMON XXXVII.

*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*—1 JOHN II. 13, 14.

AMONG others, there are two special qualifications of a good minister: the one, that he be faithful; and the other, that he be prudent. His faithfulness consists in delivering those things that are true, and his prudence in making choice of such things as are fit. The fitness of a minister's discourse lieth chiefly in a double reference: to the season and the persons. All both words and works receive a great deal of beauty from their opportunity. It was not without reason that he said, *Omniū rerum est primum*, the chief in all actions is the fit time; and Solomon, concerning 'a word spoken in due season,' mentioneth the goodness of it with a question, as if it were beyond any positive expression, 'How good is it?' Prov. xv. 23. Nor is there less regard to be had to the condition of the auditors than the fitness of the season; since hereby a discourse becometh not only seasonable but suitable. Physicians, though (unless necessity enforce) they have a regard to the season, yet especially and always they have respect to the different constitution of the patients in administering their potions; and no less doth it befit us, who are spiritual physicians, to accommodate our doctrines to the condition and disposition of those to whom we preach. Excel-

lent to this purpose is that of an ancient,\* *Pro qualitate audientium formari debet sermo doctorum, ut per singula singulis congruat et à communi adificationis arte nunquam recedat.* The preacher's sermon ought to correspond to the auditors' condition, so as may best tend to edification. Look, as in music, all the strings of the instrument, though they are touched with the same hand, yet not with a like stroke; so in preaching, all sorts of persons are to be dealt with, but not in the same way. *Aliter admonendi sunt viri, aliter fœminæ; aliter inopes, aliter locupletes; aliter juvenes, aliter senes,* as he excellently goeth on, one admonition is fit for men, another for women; one for the rich, another for the poor; one for the young, another for the old. This discreet application of our instructions is that whereof the holy apostles set us a pattern; and among the rest St John, especially in these verses, wherein we may observe him bespeaking several ages, and that in several addresses suitable to those ages, 'I write to you, fathers,' &c.

2. The reason by which our apostle ineuleateth his writing upon the fathers being already handled, that which we are next in order to insist upon, is that by

\* Rab. Maur. de Instit. lib. iii. cap. 37.

which he presseth his writing upon the young men ; as it is mentioned in the thirteenth, and again, both repeated and amplified, in the fourteenth verse.

To put them both together as expressed in these words, ' You are strong, and have overcome the wicked one, and the word of God abideth in you.' You may please to consider them two ways, *absolutely*, as a commendation, and *relatively*, as an invitation.

I. Consider the words as a commendation ; and so, that I may make use of the metaphor in the text, be pleased to observe these four particulars :

The *enemy*, the *conquest*, the *aids*, and the *combatants*.

The *enemy* is characterised by the term ' the wicked one.'

The *conquest* is ingeminated in that phrase, ' have overcome.'

The *aids* are specified in these words, ' strong,' and ' the word of God abideth.'

The *combatants* are included in the *you*, who are just before expressed to be ' young men.'

1. Begin we with the *enemy*, who is called ' the wicked one.' There are three grand adversaries of our salvation, and all of them have this epithet given to them. The world is called by St Paul an evil world, Gal. i. 4 ; and the flesh, which is the corruption of our nature, is called the evil treasures of the heart, Mat. xii. 38 ; and the devil frequently the evil one, the wicked one. In this respect Zanchy conceiveth by the wicked one here to be understood synecdochically, all our spiritual enemies ;\* but I rather incline to that exposition, which interpreteth the wicked one here mentioned to be the devil. He it is who not only here, but twice more in this epistle, is so called by our apostle ; and no doubt he learned it from his Master, who giveth him this title in the parable of the tares ; yea, St Chrysostom, and others of the fathers, † are of opinion, that the evil from which our Saviour teacheth us to pray that God would deliver us, is the devil ; and accordingly Tertullian ‡ renders several places of Scripture which mention the devil by *malus*, *malignum*, *malignus*, *nequam*, evil, wicked, malignant.

It is a name which no doubt is given to the devil, *antonomastice*, by way of eminency ; *ποιητός*, saith Illyricus, § is more than *κακός*, and noteth one who is *exercitatus in omni malitie genere*, exercised in all kinds of wickedness ; *ὁ ποιητός* is more than *ποιητός*, and noteth one who is *insigniter improbus*, infamously, notoriously wicked. As though holiness be a quality communicable to the creature, yet God and Christ are emphatically called in Scripture ' the holy One,' because, according to Hannah's saying, ' there is none

so holy as the Lord ;' so though there be many evil and wicked persons in the world, yet the devil is the wicked one, because there is none so evil as the devil ; and therefore St Chrysostom\* giveth this reason of the appellation. Christ calleth him the wicked one, *διὰ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς κακίας*, because of that hyperbolical wickedness whereof he is guilty.

For the better explanation of this, I shall briefly resolve these two queries,

How he came to be so ?

Wherein he appeareth to be so ?

It would be a little inquired into, how the person here spoken of came to deserve this title ; the answer to which I shall return,

1. Negatively. He was not so by creation. The devil, if you look upon him in his first original, was God's creature, and therefore good ; yea, in the highest form of creatures, an angel, and therefore excellent. Indeed, the angels are creatures whom God placeth near to himself ; they stand about his royal throne, from whom he keepeth nothing but the regal diadem ; and their nature most fully resembleth the divine, who is goodness itself. Upon this account St Austin asserts, † and truly, *ipsius diaboli natura, in quantum natura est, non est mala*, the nature of the devil is still in itself good, yea, very good, because angelical. The Manichees and Priscillianists very confidently affirm that the devil was created by an evil God, and so evil from the beginning ; but when our blessed Saviour saith *non stetit*, it manifestly implieth a *fuit in veritate*, he did not stand, that he was in the truth, a state of goodness and integrity. To this purpose Tostatus well observeth ‡ that the devil is called the wicked one, not as if he were *simpliciter et absolute malus*, absolutely evil. God, indeed, is called the holy one, because he is so essentially : not so the devil, the wicked one ; and therefore,

2. Affirmatively. It is not by creation but defection, and apostasy from that state wherein he was created. That the devil has become so evil, he may thank himself for it. God made him an angel of light, but he hath made himself an angel of darkness. It is true, God made him mutably good, inasmuch as he made his will free to choose or refuse ; but this freedom was only the occasion ; it was his own abuse of that liberty was the cause of his wickedness. Indeed, to be by nature unchangeably good is an incommunicable property of the Deity ; and the reason is plain, because it is only the will of God, which is the adequate rule of goodness ; so that there is nothing good but what he wills, and whatever he wills is good. No wonder, then, if the creature whose goodness consists in a conformity to the will of God be capable of a defection from the rule ; but still, inasmuch as by creation it is invested with a power of willing a conformity to the

\* Zanch. in loc.

† *ποιητός δ' ἵσταυθα τὸν διαβόλον καλεῖ.*—Chrysost. in orat. tom.

‡ *Tertul. de pat. cap. iv., de cultu fœm. cap. v., de fuga in persec. cap. viii.*

§ Illyr. in loc.

\* Chrysost. ibid.

† Aug. de civit. Dei. lib. xix. chap. xiii.

‡ Tostat. in Mat.



rule, and walking according to it, this actual defection is not to be ascribed to God but itself, which, abusing its innate liberty, chose to swerve from the divine law, and so became abominably wicked. And now, by how much the more excellent a creature the devil was at first, by so much the more vile and evil he is become. It is a known saying, *Corruptio optimi pessima*, the best wine maketh the sourest vinegar; *quanto gradus altior, tanto casus grandior*, the higher the place, the greater the fall; and therefore the devil being by creation the best, must needs by transgression be the worst, and so deserve the name of ὁ πονηρὸς, the wicked one.

It would further be inquired, wherein it appeareth that the devil is so wicked? The discovery whereof is manifest in these five particulars.

1. He is the wicked one, because he is the first in wickedness, and the ringleader of rebellion against God, τὸν πονηρὸν, i.e. *perditum illum et scelestum malorum inventorem*, so Justinian,\* the wicked one, that is, the desperate inventor of all evil. Observable to this purpose is it, that our blessed Saviour calls him, John viii. 44, 'the father of lies.' He that is the first inventor of anything, is, in the Hebrew phrase, styled the father of it. Jubal, who invented music, is called the 'father of all such as handle the harp and the organ;' so is the devil the father of lies, because he made the first lie. Indeed, if you survey the pedigree, not only of that, but all sin, you will find him to be the father of it. Our first parents were great sinners, but yet they sinned by persuasion, Eve by the serpent, Adam by Eve's solicitation; but the devil had no tempter. The angels are said to 'leave their own habitation, not keeping their first state,' (to wit) voluntarily of their own accord, apostatising from that state wherein God had created them, and so rebelling against the divine Majesty. Now look, as it is a great honour to any one to have been the inventor of anything that is excellent, the first in finding out any rare secret, so it is a great aggravation of the devil's wickedness, that he was 'first in transgression.'

2. He is the wicked one, because he is obstinately and immutably wicked; so Tostatus, † *Quia in malo firmatus*; and Brugensis, ‡ *Cujus voluntas immutabilis a malo ad bonum*, as he was the inventor of, so he is a persister in, wickedness. By creation he was, and (as hath been already shewed) must be mutable from good to evil. By corruption he is become immutable from evil to good, God justly denying him that grace which should change his will. Indeed, we read in St James his epistle, that the devils tremble, to wit, in respect of the punishment to which they know themselves reserved; but we read not of their repenting, no, not so much as relenting in respect of the sin they have committed, though they cannot but know and be fully convinced what they have done, and how repugnant it is to God's law, and consequently to right reason.

3. He is the wicked one, because he is *malitia studio-*

\* Justin. in loc. † Tostat. in Mat. ‡ Brug. in Mat.

*sissimus*, so Illyricus,\* most industriously wicked: πονηρὸς is derived from πονέω. What pains and labour doth the devil take in wickedness! Among other titles by which sin is called, this is one, that it is 'the work of the devil,' sin being indeed the devil's work, which he doth most unweariedly pursue. *Devil* in our English language is *quasi, do evil*; indeed, for this many thousand years it hath been his continual employment, never resting day nor night to perpetrate and promote wickedness. The most notorious wicked man is sometimes at rest, and alloweth himself at least a sleeping time, but the devil is always active in sin; and as he is never well employed, so he is never idle. Christ 'went about doing good,' and he compasseth the earth doing evil: in one word, he is sin's sworn servant, drudge, slave. It is true, sometimes this wicked one transformeth himself into an angel of light, maketh a show of holiness; but it is as true that then he is then most wicked. Nor is the devil more a devil at any time than when he is wrapped up in Samuel's mantle, hypocrisy being a duplicated iniquity.

4. He is the wicked one, because *conatur malos efficere*, so Tostatus. † He is a tempter to wickedness, ὁ πονηρὸς because ὁ πειραστὴν, he is not content to be bad himself, but he draweth others to it. Being himself fallen into misery, he envied man's felicity, and therefore seduced him to impiety. As he was the first sinner, so he was the cause of sin. He tempts all persons, at all times, in all places; and for no other end but either to hinder them from good, as he did Paul, who tells the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. ii. 18, he would have 'come once and again, but Satan hindered him;' or else to allure them to evil, as he stirred up David to number the people, and put it into Judas his heart to betray Christ. Indeed, the devil is called in Scripture both a tempter and an accuser, this being his method, first to draw men to, and then to accuse men for, sin. It was the brand set upon Jeroboam, as denominating him a very bad man, that he 'made Israel to sin.' How abominably wicked, then, is the devil, who maketh persons, nations, yea, the whole world, to sin!

5. And yet lastly, that we may take the height, or rather fathom the depth, of his wickedness, he is the wicked one, inasmuch as he vigorously pursueth and constantly persevereth in wickedness, because it is wickedness; not out of any pretended benefit which may accrue to himself, but because it is dishonourable to God and injurious to man. Indeed, pleasure and profit and honour are the arguments by which he persuadeth, and the baits by which he catcheth, the sinner; but none of these are any motives in regard of himself. Merely the antipathy he beareth to God, and hatred he hath of goodness, putteth him upon endeavours to promote sin in the world; therefore he delights in evil because God abhorreth it; therefore it is his joy, because it is God's dishonour; finally, therefore it pleaseth his will, because it defaceth God's image. To live in any sin,

\* Illyr. in loc.

† Tostat. in Mat.

though because of a seeming advantage, is odious ; but to be wicked because it is wickedness, is abominable. No man ever came to such a state of wickedness, but he committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. How desperately wicked, then, must the devil needs be, who sinneth not only *though*, but *because*, he knoweth it to be sin !

To wind up this, then. We all pretend to hate the devil. Oh, then, why do we love sin ? It is an argument which God himself useth to persuade to holiness, because it is his attribute, ' Be you holy, for I am holy.' Surely it should be a prevalent dissuasion from wickedness, because it is the devil's property. As we abhor to be like the devil, let us abhor to be wicked. Indeed, we all *defy* Satan as he is the pursuivant of divine justice, but yet I fear we *deify* him as he is the god of this world, and the head of the carnal state. Oh remember, if we do his lusts, we own him as our father, whilst yet we pretend to abhor him as an enemy. As therefore we would not be the devil's children, let us cast away our sins.

And especially take we heed of those degrees of wickedness which denominate him the wicked one. Far be it from us to make wickedness our trade, our business, by customary committing it, as those do who are called ' workers of iniquity ;' to make it not only the work of our hand, but our brain, by inventing it, as they were whom the apostle characteriseth to be ' inventors of evil things,' Rom. i. 30, yea, not only of our heads, but our hearts, by delighting in it, as they of whom Solomon speaketh, that ' rejoice to do evil,' Prov. ii. 14 ; and which is yet worse, to take the devil's office out of his hand by tempting others to sin, as Elymas, who stirred up Sergius Paulus against the truth, whom therefore St Paul called the ' child of the devil, and an enemy of all righteousness,' Acts xiii. 10.

In one word, let us be so far from imitating the devil as that we learn not to hearken to him, but rather, when he tempts, to answer him in Christ's language, ' Get thee behind me, Satan.' Be sure, if the devil persuade thee to anything, it is either in itself wickedness, or for a wicked end. Whatever show of amity he may profess, or promises of good he may make, yet believe him not ; he is thine enemy, and it is, though an apparent good, yet a real evil to which he solicits thee ; for he is the wicked one.

2. Having given you a view of the enemy, that which next cometh to be considered is the conquest which all true Christians have over this enemy : ' You have overcome the wicked one.' To give you the full extent of this word, consider it two ways.

1. As opposed to making peace. It is not you have made a league with, but you have overcome the wicked one, since there is no way to deal with the devil but by victory. Indeed, in temporal wars the case is different ; *Bellum geritur, ut pax acquiratur*, a good peace is the end of every just war ; yea, and a peace, where it may be obtained, is rather to be chosen than victory, that the effusion of blood may be prevented ; but in

this spiritual war with Satan nothing less than a conquest must suffice. The truth is, every Christian soldier must either be *victor* or *victus*, a conqueror over, or else conquered by, the wicked one. The devil will not make peace with us upon any terms but that he may be lord over us ; all his fair promises are upon that condition he made with Christ, ' If thou wilt fall down and worship me ;' so that if we make a league with, we are overcome by the devil.

2. As more than fighting. Indeed, conquest supposeth a battle, and victory is preceded with a fight. If it be not so always in temporal wars, by reason of the cowardice of the enemy, yet it is in spiritual, since the devil is too much a lion to be overcome without a combat. *Quid aliud quotidie in mundo, quam pugna adversus diabolum geritur?* saith St Cyprian ;\* we must continually make account to be engaged in a war with Satan, so that what is threatened to Asa may be justly said to new-born Christians, ' From henceforth thou shalt have war' with the prince of darkness. And indeed this is that which maketh for the honour of Christian soldiers ; for, as Maximus Tyrius saith of Hercules, if you take from him *τὰ θῆρια καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους*, the savage beasts and cruel tyrants with whom he grappled, you deprive him of the reputation of his valour. So the graces of a Christian would not be so illustrious were it not for the devil's temptations. Christians, then, are fighters, and more than fighters, for withal they are conquerors ; nay, if you will believe St Paul, Rom. viii. 37, they are ' conquerors, and more than conquerors.'

Indeed, it may seem somewhat strange that our apostle should speak of this victory as of a thing already accomplished, whenas (they of whom he speaketh being young men) the war was, as it were, but begun. It is (and justly) accounted a presumption in other wars to sing a triumph before the victory, and promise a victory before the fight, like Lucullus, who, in the beginning of his fight against Tygranes and Mithridates, cried out, *Vicimus!* and Caesar, whose usual boast was *Veni, vidi, vici*, I came, I saw, I overcame ! But in this war our apostle doubts not to affirm of those young soldiers they had overcome, and that not without good reason ; for,

1. They are said to overcome the devil whilst they are yet in the fight, because they are sure to overcome. It is not unusual in Scripture to express that as accomplished which shall surely be fulfilled.† Thus the prophets often spake of Christ's sufferings, which a long time after were to be undergone, in the present and preterperfect tense ; for this reason might St John thus express this victory. Indeed, it is not so in other battles. *Alen belli incerta*, the success of war is dubious ; oftentimes the less number, weaker side, and I worst cause, gets the day. In this respect it is justly

\* Cypr. de Mort.

† Non tam ad spiritualem pugnam incitat quam certam illis victoriam pollicetur.—*Fer. in loc.*



said, 'Let not him that puts on his armour boast as he that putteth it off;' they that have gone into the field big with hope have returned home with shame. But in this war it is no more but fight, and the conquest is certain. St James's position is express, 'Resist the devil, and he will fly from you,' chap. iv. 8. If we stand to it, he runs away; Satan cannot conquer us without our own consent.\* It was his word to Christ, 'Cast thyself down:' he could not cast him down. We may give ourselves into his hands, otherwise he cannot captivate us. Indeed, Christ hath wrought the victory for us; so the first promise telleth of him that he should break the serpent's head, that is, his power and policy; so the evangelical history records how he overcame in the wilderness Satan's impetuous assaults, Mat. iv. 2, *ut oppressum atque contritum tradat discipulis concultandum*, as St Jerome excellently,† that he might deliver him bruised and subdued, to be trampled on by his disciples. Finally, so St Paul asserts of him, Col. ii. 19, 'He spoiled principalities and powers;' and again, Heb. ii. 16, 'Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, to wit, the devil.' No wonder, then, if all Christians, being engrafted into Christ, 'overcome by the blood of the Lamb.' It is safe fighting with a disarmed man and captivated enemy; well may we be sure of the day who wrestle with a conquered adversary.‡

2. They are said to overcome, because they have begun the conquest. Look how believers are said to have eternal life, because the spiritual life in them is the beginning of eternal; so they are said to overcome, because they begin that conquest which shall never end. Indeed, the church triumphant is on the other side the sun, nor shall a complete victory be obtained till this mortality put on immortality. The Israelites' march out of Egypt was an emblem of our taking the field against Satan. And when had they prevailed? Not till they lodged their colours in Canaan. Only glorified saints are above the devil's reach, but withal we must distinguish between Satan's commanding and assaulting power. Every converted Christian is delivered from the one, but not from the other. Satan is not so conquered but that he still layeth siege, yet he is so conquered as that he is turned out of the castle. The devil still rageth, and more than before, but his dominion is taken away; so that, notwithstanding renewed assaults and particular foils, he hath no fixed rule in the heart.§ As, therefore, St Paul, who bids the Colossians 'mortify their earthly members,' asserting of them just before, 'you

\* *Infirmus hostis qui non potest vincere nisi volentem.*—*Jer. ad Demet.* Diabolus suadere et sollicitare potest, cogere omnino non potest; non enim cogendo sed suadendo nocet, nec extorquet a nobis consensum sed petit.—*Aug. lib. vii. hom. xii.*

† *Jer. ep. viii ad Demet.* ‡ *Vide Chrysol. ser. ii.*

§ *Aliud est intra regnare, aliud est extra oppugnare.*—*Aug. in John, tract. xii.*

are dead,' Col. iii. 3, meaneth, according to Davenant's gloss,\* *mortificare capistis*, you have begun to die. So St John intends by this, you have overcome; that is, you have begun to overcome, yet so as that we must not be weary, but still prepare for more assaults, and so persevere fighting to the end.

3. They are said to overcome, as *inchoativè* so *interpretativè*. In God's account and estimation, our striving against the devil is a conquest over him. Look, as Abraham is said to offer his son Isaac, when yet a ram was sacrificed, because his will to offer him was esteemed by God as if he had done it, so a Christian endeavour to overcome the devil (though we cannot fully master him; nay, are sometimes mastered by him) is accepted as if it were a victory. When the child taketh the bow in his hand, putteth the arrow into the bow, and draweth as far as it can, the father accounts it as if the child had hit the mark; so doth our gracious God look on the struggling of his servants with Satanical temptations, and our continuing to combat is, in his merciful acceptation, a gaining the conquest.

To end this. What an encouragement should the consideration hereof be to us in our Christian warfare! What though the victory be difficult, not to be obtained without sweat and blood! Yet it is possible, nay, certain; if the difficulty discourage, let the certainty encourage. Indeed, there be many inducements to this combat: the authority of our call, having a commission from the King of kings; the justness of our cause, as being against him who is both ours and God's enemy; above all, the assurance of success, as being such a fight as shall unquestionably end in conquest.

The truth is, on the one hand, if we yield to him he is an imperious tyrant; and, on the other hand, if we resist him, he is a timorous coward. The historian said of Alexander, that he was *δένος μάχόμενος*, and *ξήλιος ζελάτησας*, a formidable warrior and a gentle conqueror, but the devil is a cruel conqueror and a faint warrior. This lion, to use St Bernard's expression,† *rugire potest, ferire non potest*, may roar, but cannot tear; *rugiat quantum vult, tantum non fugiat oris Christi*, let him roar as much as he will, only let not Christ's sheep run away. Fight, therefore (according to St Paul's counsel), this good fight, which is good, as in the cause, so in the event; *pugnate ut vincatis, vincite ut coronemini* (according to St Austin's exhortation, fight that you may conquer, and, conquering, be crowned,‡ which, that you may be enabled to do, furnish yourselves with choice and excellent weapons. And so I am fallen on the

3. Next considerable, the *helps* whereby this victory is attained, in these words, 'you are strong,' and 'the word of God abideth in you.' This wicked one in the text, with whom we are to encounter, is such an adversary as wants neither power nor policy, strength

\* Daven. *ibid.*

† Bern. in l's.—*Qui habit*, ser. xiii.

‡ Aug. in loc.

nor skill, to set upon us. In regard of the one he is compared to a lion, of the other to a serpent; and truly, in both these respects it may seem strange that we should overcome him; but these words return an answer to such an objection, letting us see that true Christians have that strength whereby they can grapple with the devil's power, and, by the word dwelling in them, they have that wisdom which can discover and defeat the devil's subtleties. The participation, then, of a divine strength, and the inhabitation of God's word, are the two singular helps by which the wicked one is overcome.

1. Begin we (and at this time end) with the first of these, as it is briefly couched in these words, 'you are strong.'

For the unfolding whereof I shall briefly despatch two things, namely, the necessity and nature of this strength.

1. You are strong, and great need there is you should be so; nothing more necessary for a soldier than bodily, for a Christian than spiritual, strength, and that especially on a threefold account.

1. Soldiers are put upon long and tedious marches, which they cannot perform without strength. It is no wonder if the weak sickly soldier throw down his arms, or lie down in the way, as being not able to march forward. What else is a Christian's life but a journey, a march, wherein he is to continue to the last? but, alas! how should he do this without strength? Among the many caveats given us in Scripture, none more frequent than those against weariness and fainting in our minds, Gal. vi. 9, of backsliding and drawing back from Christianity, Heb. xii. 3, thereby intimating how hard a work it is to perform, and how apt we are to fail and faint; and therefore in this respect we have need of strength.

2. Soldiers are exposed to the scorching heat, and the night's cold, to hunger, and thirst, and watching, in a word, to much hardship; and this they cannot endure without strength. St Paul asserts it concerning all who 'live godly in Christ Jesus,' 2 Tim. iii. 12, that they must 'suffer persecution;' and elsewhere, Rom. viii. 37, he reckons up a catalogue of evils very incident to Christians, 'tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword;' and if we cannot do good, much less can we suffer evil, without this strength. It is the strong back that can bear an heavy burden, a strong ship which can abide blustering storms, the strong Christian who must take up his cross and undergo afflictions.

3. Lastly, and most suitable to our present purpose, soldiers are to encounter with their enemies, receive and give assaults; and many times the enemy with whom they are to wrestle is very potent, so that, without a considerable strength, there is no expectation of a victory. Upon this account Christians stand in greater need of strength, since he with whom they fight is, as St John styleth him, the great red

dragon, Rev. xii. 10, yea, in St Paul's language, the god of this world, Eph. ii. 2. Indeed, when we consider that this wicked one is for his nature a spirit, an angel, a creature which excels in strength, Ps. ciii. 20, hath for number a legion of devils at his command, and if he please to beleaguer one simple person, wants not power, if God let him loose, to make use of all creatures as the engines of his temptation, we cannot but acknowledge his strength is great, and therefore there is no overcoming him without a greater and surpassing strength.

2. But that which would chiefly be considered is, wherein this strength of a Christian lieth, by which he overcome the wicked one? In answer to this, know that it consists in three things:

1. In a due preparation. The strength of a soldier lieth much in his weapons; so doth the Christian's. When our blessed Saviour would let us see the devil's might, he calls him the strong-armed man, therefore strong, because armed: and when St Paul exhorts the Ephesians, chap. vi. 10, to be strong, he presently adviseth them 'to put on their armour.' Indeed, what hopes of conquest without our weapons over an armed adversary! What the several pieces of our armour are, we shall find there reckoned up; but among them all, that which St Paul bringeth in with an *ἐπι πασι*, above all, and which St Peter singleth out, is our faith, 'Whom resist stedfast in the faith.' Indeed, as the father\* excellently, *Increduli timent diabolum quasi leonem, in fide fortes despiciunt quasi vermiculum*, whilst unbelievers fear the devil as a lion, the faithful contemn him as a worm.

2. In a firm resolution. Strength of body, of arms, will little prevail where there is not strength of mind and a magnanimous spirit. 'Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong,' Isa. xxxv. 4, that is, be courageous; and accordingly they are put together, Joshua i. 7, 'Be strong and very courageous.' To which agreeth that of the apostle Paul in his military precepts, 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 'Quit yourselves like men, be strong.' It is not all the wiles and assaults of the devil can beat off a fixed Christian. He saith with Christ, 'Get thee behind me, Satan;' or in words much like those of David, Ps. cxix. 115, 'Depart from me, thou unclean spirit, for I will keep the commandments of my God.' In one word, he that goeth out with resolution, and marcheth on with courage, holdeth out with constancy, and cometh off with conquest.

3. Lastly, In the Spirit's assistance. It is very observable that the apostle, when he would have us be strong, presently addeth, 'in the Lord, and in the power of his might,' thereby teaching us where, and in whom, our strength lieth. Indeed, the preparation we make for the battle is from the Lord, and therefore our armour is called 'the armour of God,' not only in respect of institution, it being that armour which

\* Bern.



he appoints us, but constitution, because it is that armour which he giveth us. Besides this, that resolution that is in us, is put into us ; it is God must strengthen our hearts, and when both these are wrought, there is still required the Spirit's concurring assistance to enable us in the resistance. He that worketh in us to will, must also work in us to do ; and he that helpeth us to put on, must teach us to use our armour. Look as sometimes when the army which cometh against a city or country is numerous, there is a necessity of procuring foreign supplies ; so is it always with a Christian in his combat with Satan, there is a necessity of calling in heavenly aid.

To end this, then. Whosoever, O Christian, thou art assaulted by this wicked one, what shouldst thou do but labour to strengthen thyself against him ! But be sure thou presume not upon thine own strength. Remember Peter's denial, and trust not to thine own ability ; he is the best soldier in the spiritual warfare that fighteth upon his knees, seeking to God for grace. Bewail, then, thy own weakness, depend on divine strength, implore the Spirit's enablement, and doubt not but he that begins will finish his good work ; and as he calls thee to the fight by his command, and assists thee in it by his Spirit, so he will crown thee with success and victory after it.

### SERMON XXXVIII.

*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*—1 JOHN II: 13, 14.

THIS is now the sixth time that I have read this scripture in your ears. Not that I like the humour of dwelling upon one text, when the sacred book affords so much variety, but because I have met with so much variety in this one text. Indeed, in these verses, our apostle seemeth, as it were, to erect a school, wherein are three forms: the first of experienced fathers, the second of vigorous young men, and the third of hopeful little children. And no wonder if it ask some time to examine these forms,<sup>e</sup> and instruct them in their several lessons. Or if you please, you may behold him building three tabernacles, or rather, raising a fabric of three stories, the uppermost whereof is of old men, the middlemost of young men, and the lowest of little children ; in each of which there are several rooms, and some of them very spacious. No wonder if it require many hours to walk through and take a view of them and their inhabitants. Finally, I may call this Scripture a book consisting of three large and fair leaves, for the instruction of old, young, and little ones ; well may it be often read and perused. 'I write to you, fathers,' &c.

The reason why our apostle writeth to young men is that which we are yet in handling, in which, considered as a commendation, we have observed four particulars. And that which is next in order to be discussed is the

2. Second branch of the third particular, as it is expressed in these words, and 'the word of God abideth in you.' It is a clause which must be looked upon two ways: in itself, and in its connection.

1. Look upon the words absolutely, and so they set before us the character of a true Christian: he is one in whom the word of God abideth. And that you

may see what this meaneth, take a short view of each word.

1. *The word* is set down indefinitely. It is intended universally for the whole doctrine of the gospel, which consists of precepts, promises, and threatenings. It is the prophet Isaiah's invitation to the embracing of the evangelical doctrine: Isa. lv. 1, 'Come to the waters, buy wine and milk.' And methinketh, in these three metaphors are fitly shadowed the three parts of the word: the precepts are as water cleansing, the promises as milk nourishing, and the threatening as wine searching, all of which we must buy, and having bought, lay up, or rather drink in. Indeed, hypocrites only suck in the milk, lay hold on the promises, refusing to drink the wine and waters, but the true Christian saith of every part of the word with Hezekiah, 'Good is the word of the Lord,' and accordingly hath regard to it.

2. *Of God.* Therefore the word finds entertainment with a godly man, because it is God's word, it being divine authority which aweth the good heart, so that it dares not neglect, much less reject ; and hence it is, that both whatsoever appeareth to be God's word, and only that which so appeareth, finds acceptance.

3. *Abideth.* Nor yet is it a slight entertainment which is given to God's word. It not only lodgeth for a time, but taketh up its constant abode. As it is received, so it is retained, according to that gloss of Estius ; \* *fidem evangelii constanter retinetis*, then the word of God abideth in, when the faith of the gospel is constantly retained and maintained by us.

4. *In you,* that is, within you, not only in the eyes by reading, ears by hearing, understanding by know-

\* Est. in loc.

ing, but in the heart; the judgment by esteeming, the memory by remembering, the will by consenting, the affections by loving, delighting, and the conscience by subjecting to it.

I cannot better illustrate this character than by taking a short view of those several metaphors by which it is expressed, of *hiding, eating, grafting, keeping, dwelling*.

David saith to God, Ps. cxix. 11, 'I have *hid* thy word in my heart;' where the Hebrew word signifieth to hide as a treasure. Conceive then, the word as the treasure, the heart as the chest; this as the cabinet, and that as the jewel. Nor doth the covetous man more carefully lock up his treasure or jewel, than David did, and every good man doth, God's word.

Jeremiah saith to God, chap. xv. 16, 'Thy words were found, and I did *eat* them.' Conceive then God's word as the soul's food, which must be eaten; that is, not only tasted by the mouth, which is hearing, but taken down into the stomach and concocted, which is meditation.

Our blessed Saviour, describing the good ground, and distinguishing it from the rest, sets it forth by this character: Luke viii. 15, 'Hearing the word of God with a good and honest heart, and *keeping* it.' The word being as the seed, which must not only be cast upon, but covered in the ground, and that is, when it is not only heard with the ear, but kept by the good heart.

St James calls the word *ἐμρυστον λόγον*, 'an engrafted word,' James i. 21, intimating, that as the graft is set into, whereby it becometh incorporated with the tree, so ought the word to be received into our souls.

Finally, St Paul exhorts the Colossians, chap. iii. 16, 'Let the word of Christ *dwel*l in you,' thereby teaching us that the word must not only stand at the door of our ears, but enter into the chamber of our hearts, and that not as a guest, to tarry for a night, but as an inhabitant, to dwell with us for ever; and then it is that the word not only is, but abideth in us.

And now, what should be the care of every one, but that this word may take possession of, and abide in our souls? God's mercy hath hitherto continued the sound of it in our churches. Oh let us labour to find the power of it in our hearts! since it will little benefit, nay, much prejudice us, to have had it *among* us, if withal it abide not *in* us.

If we would know whether as yet the word have thus far prevailed, it will best be discovered by reflecting on the fore-mentioned metaphors. If the word abide in us as a treasure, it will enrich us with heavenly grace; if as food, it will strengthen us to the performance of spiritual duties; if as seed, it will make us fruitful in good works; if as a graft, it will transform us into Christ's own likeness; if as an inhabitant, it will cast out sin and Satan, and powerfully rule in our hearts. Oh let us endeavour to find this effectual operation of the word upon the

hearts; and that it may be so, take notice that there are four things necessarily requisite:

1. *Apertio*, the opening not only *auris*, of the ear (concerning which David speaketh, Ps. xl. 6, and which is a necessary antecedent), but *cordis*, of the heart, wherof the apostle speaketh concerning Lydia, Acts xvi. 14. There can be no grafting without opening the tree, nor can the word enter till the heart be opened; to which end there must be *contritio*, a breaking of the heart. As the earth is opened by ploughing and breaking it into clods, so is the heart by contrition, which is a spiritual ploughing. The door of the soul is so fast barred, that there can be no opening without breaking open. 'To him will I look,' saith God, 'that is of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word,' Isa. lxvi. 2; whereby is intimated, that God's word is most carefully received by the contrite spirit. Indeed, a broken vessel lets the liquor go, but a broken heart is the best preserver of God's word.

2. *Purgatio*. Besides the opening of the heart by contrition, there must be a cleansing it by reformation. Whilst the stomach is full of ill humours, it either cannot receive, or else will presently cast up the best food. God's word cannot endure a filthy heart, nor will a filthy heart endure God's word. No wonder if St James exhorts to 'lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, that we may receive with meekness the engrafted word,' James i. 21.

3. *Preparatio*. Nor yet is this all; but the heart being opened and cleansed, must be furnished and fitted for the entertainment of this heavenly guest. Indeed, what provision the Shunamite made for the prophet, we must in a spiritual sense make for the word, a chamber, a table, a stool, a candlestick, and a bed: a chamber, and that a large one, our whole soul; a table, and that not of stone, an heart of flesh; a stool, and that a low one, an humble spirit; a candlestick, and that a bright one, an enlightened mind; finally, a bed, and that a soft one, even a tender conscience. So will this word vouchsafe to enter in and dwell with us.

4. *Cautela*. And yet once more, there must be a diligent care that this word, after it is received, be not lost. If we would have this word abide with us, we must, according to St Paul's phrase to Titus, *ἀντιχεσθαι*, hold it fast, to wit, against all opposition, whereby our enemy seeketh to despoil us of it, and according to that apostolical caveat, 'Take earnest heed to the things which we have heard,' *μηποτε παραπευδῶμεν*, lest (as leaking vessels) at any time we let them slip, and so, instead of staying with us, like a flowing river they pass away from us.

2. Having thus given you a positive aspect of this clause, be pleased to view it in reflection upon the victory here asserted, which lets us see that,

By the abiding of the word of God in us, we overcome the abiding one. Among the several pieces of



our spiritual armour, which St Paul reckoneth up, 'the sword of the Spirit' is not the least, 'which is the word of God,' because like a sword it cuts and woundeth the devil to the heart; and as the sword doth no execution unless taken into and managed by the hand, so neither doth the word unless received into the heart. That encounter of David with Goliath is a fit emblem of the Christian's combat with Satan; and as he took five stones out of the brook, by one of which, thrown out of a sling, he dashed Goliath in the forehead, so must we have in readiness those five stones of promises, precepts, prohibitions, threatenings, and examples, and throw them upon all occasions, in the sling of faith, against the wicked one. Indeed, which way soever the devil sets upon us, God's word in the heart is of singular use and service. If as a lion, by violent assaults, it is a chain to fetter him; if as a serpent, by fraudulent wiles, it is a charm to disappoint him. Whatsoever Satan tempts to, the word armeth us against it, since it is some sin or other to which he prompts us, and there is no sin against which it affords not powerful antidotes.

This the devil well knoweth, and therefore one of his principal designs is to hinder us from hearing and receiving this word. No sooner had God given a word to Adam, Gen. ii. 19, but Satan striveth to subvert his faith in the threat, and thereby divert him from obedience to the command. No sooner were the tables of the law written, but the devil endeavoureth to have them broken;\* for so some conceive that the devil's aim in tempting the Israelites to idolatry was, that thereby Moses might be enraged, and the tables broken. Those fowls of the air, in the parable of the sower, what are they but the devils of hell, whose work it is to pick the seed of the word which is sown among us, that it may not abide with us; and all this because he knoweth it is our best, both offensive and defensive, weapon.

It is true, sometimes the devil striveth to turn this sword into a shield; alleging (as he did to Christ) Scripture for the justifying of his temptations; but how falsely and perversely, is obvious in that particular instance. But still the Scripture verities are undoubtedly contrary to his diabolical lies, discovering the subtilty and weakening the energy of his assaults.

How careful then, should every one of us be, both to get and keep God's word, whereby we may be enabled to resist the devil's temptations, because he continually watcheth to devour us. Let us every day gird this sword upon our thighs, that he may never find us unprepared. Believe it, Christians, God's word is the richest treasury to supply our wants, and the strongest armoury to oppose our enemies. This weapon was that which the captain of our salvation made choice of; for so you find him in the wilderness refelling Satan's renewed solicitations with a *Scriptum*

*est*;\* and surely it is fit that we, who are the common soldiers, should make use of the same defence, since Christ purposely so dealt with the devil, that he might thereby give us an example. Indeed, as the doves (to use St Gregory's† comparison), seeing the shadow of the flying hawks in the water, by casting themselves upon it, escape their fury, so holy men, beholding in God's word Satanical subtilties, and addicting themselves to those sacred counsels, avoid his snares. And as those that live in royal towers and armouries (to borrow St Chrysostom's‡ metaphor), are secure from thieves and robberies, so where these spiritual books dwell, diabolical power is weakened, and poison expelled. The truth is, no arrow is so sharp as those which are fetched out of the Lord's quiver. Those darts which are taken out of God's armoury pierce deepest; and it is the sword of the Spirit which cuts best. And therefore, however the devil change his weapons, yet let us keep ours, making use of this upon all occasions, against all temptations. And so much shall suffice for the third considerable, namely, the helps in the battle.

4. The last, but not the least, nay, chief observable is yet behind, namely, the *combatants*, in the *you*, to wit, young men, whom he highly commends, in that they were strong, by the word of God abiding in them, to overcome the wicked one. And here is something both implied and expressed.

1. That which is implied is, that the wicked one is especially an enemy to young men. None are in greater danger than they, to be drawn to wickedness by this wicked one.

1. He well knoweth that young men are most capable of doing either God or him service;§ then they are in the prime of their days, the faculties of their souls most vigorous, the members of their bodies most active, and so fit for employment. No wonder if he chiefly strive to divert them from God's, and draw them to his service.

2. Besides, he subtilly observeth, that that age of all others is most prone to corrupt affections and actions. When David saith, Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways?' whenas yet the question and answer belongeth to every man, what doth he imply, but that young men are very prone to defile their ways?¶ When St Paul exhorts Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 23 (who yet was very weakly in body), to 'fly youthful lusts,' what doth he but intimate that lusts are especially incident to youth? It is St Ambrose his note upon those words of Job, chap. xiii. 26,\* 'Thou makest me to possess the sins of my

\* Ideo Jesus omnes tentationes solis sacris Scripturis vicit, ut doceret nos sic pugnare et vincere.—*Cajet.*

† Gr. M. in Cant.

‡ Chrysost. hom in Matth.

§ Nulli etati ita insidiatur diabolus, ac adolescentie.—*Fer in loc., Beza ibid.*

¶ Cereus in vitia flecti, mentoribus asper.—*Horat.*

¶ Ambr. de inter. Job lib. i. cap. 7.

\* Vide Rivet. in Exod.

youth,' *Pulchrè id atatis arripit ad querelam, quæ magis ad vitium lubrica esse consuevit.* Very fitly doth he complain of that age, as being most apt to fall into sin. In this respect, youth is called by St Austin,\* *flos atatis, periculum mentis*, as the flower of the age, so the danger of the mind, the mind being then in danger (as St Jerome† observeth), now of dashing on the Charybdis of luxury, and then of being plunged into on the Scylla of lust; yea, innumerable are the vices which do cleave fast to this age.

St Austin, comparing childhood, and youth, and old age together, well inferreth to this purpose: if childish and old age be not free from temptations, of which the one is but entering into, and the other is going out of, this life, that but now was not, and this ere long will not be, *quid sentiendum est de flagrantia juvenilis atatis*, what may we think of young age! No marvel if it be shaken with the winds and waves of various assaults.‡ Indeed, those lusts which children are not come to, and old age is past, young men are prone to be carried away with. Not much unlike is that observation of St Ambrose, *habet pueritia innocentiam, senectus prudentiam*, &c., childhood hath innocence, old age prudence, only youth is rash in counsels, weak against temptation, and fervent in evil. Thus as the boiling pot sendeth up most seam, so in flaming youth are the strongest inclinations to passion, uncleanness, intemperance. Aristotle observeth of youth, that it is eager in desire, bold in enterprises, changeable in mind, prone to anger, confident in hope, and presumptuous of its own knowledge; qualities which very much dispose them to evil. Besides, men in youth begin to embrace human society, mutual converses, and alas, how easily are they entangled with evil company; and no wonder if the devil, having so great advantages against, doth with the greatest violence set upon, young men.

It is a meditation which should teach young men to be so much the more watchful, careful, fearful, lest they be caught in the devil's snares. Indeed, there is no time wherein we can be secure, but we have most reason to fear in youth, because we are then most in danger. This old serpent loveth to entwine himself about young men; this arch-enemy of man thinketh no triumphs like to those wherein he leads youth captive; and therefore, of all ages, let young men walk in an holy fear of, and vigilant preparation against, diabolical assaults.

2. That which is expressed is, that these young men to whom our apostle wrote had prevailed against the devil, through the strength of God's word and grace.

There are three excellencies which especially belong to young men, and whereof they much glory, to wit, strength of body, firmness of memory, victory in war; and all these our apostle here attributeth to these

young men in a spiritual and consequently most excellent sense.

1. *Adolescentes delectat et ornat fortitudo corporis*, saith Ferus upon the text,\* bodily strength is an ornament of, and delight to, youth. The name for young men here used refers to it, as Justinian observeth; and it is Solomon's assertion, Prov. xx. 29, 'The glory of young men is their strength.' Lo, here St John commends these young men, in that they were strong, and that not so much outwardly as inwardly, in body as mind, in might as grace.

2. It is a great honour to young men that they have, as quick wits, so good memories, whereas children and old men are forgetful. It was the excellency of these young men, that their memories were well employed, to wit, about divine oracles; they had the word of God abiding in them.

3. The young is the warlike age. Youth *gloriatur in viribus, gaudet in luctibus*, glorieth in strength and boasteth in combats. Such was the *Romana juvenus*, the Roman youth, a people given to war, and delighted in victories. Behold, these young men are happily engaged in an encounter with the worst of enemies, over whom they obtain the conquest. And surely, whilst valorous attempts and exploits in civil wars deserve due praises, spiritual victories challenge it much more. Honourable are those young men who are famous for the natural endowments of strength and memory, for the warlike achievements of victories and triumphs; but happy, yea, thrice happy, are those young men who excel in those heavenly ornaments of strength and grace, retaining God's word and victory over the wicked one.

And now, *ad ros mihi sermo, O juvenes* (to use St Austin's † expression), O young men, let me address my discourse to you. You are strong in body; ay, but are you not weak in grace? You have marrow in your bones, blood in your veins; ay, but have you God's word abiding in your hearts? You are perhaps valorous and victorious in wars with men, but are you not cowards in resisting Satan? Instead of being victors over, are you not slaves to, him? You delight in victories, but are they not such as proclaim you his captives: the assaulting of beauties, to overcome their chastities; the conquering of one another in cups and oaths, or such like impieties? There is no temptation with which the devil doth more frequently beset young men than that of procrastination. The devil's voice is, *ἐμοὶ τὸ παρὸν, θεῶ τὸ μέλλον*, so Gregory Nazianzen; ‡ *ἐμοὶ σήμερον, αὐριον τῷ θεῷ*, so Basil the Great.§ That *Vox corvina*, as St Austin calleth it, || the crow's note, *Cras, cras*, give me to-day, let God have to-morrow; give me the time present, let God be served hereafter. And,

\* Fer. Justin. in loc

† Aug. de Temp. Ser. 246.

‡ Naz. Orat. 40.

§ Bas. M. In eos qui differunt panit.

|| Aug. Ser. 71, ad fratres in eremo.

\* Aug. de Temp. Ser. 246.

† Aug. l. d.

‡ Hier. ep. i.



alas! how are the greatest part of youth miserably overcome by temptation, whilst (as Clemens Alexandrinus\* sadly complaineth) whereas in other matters we are hasty, yea, too oft precipitant, in business of serving God, we are very deliberate, long before we resolve, and when we resolve before we put it in execution.

Oh that all young men would receive this seasonable word of exhortation. Begin betimes to acquaint yourselves with God's word, and engage in the war with this wicked one. To this end ponder a while on these ensuing considerations.

1. Possibly, nay, probably, you may not live to be old. Old age is that which none can assure himself of, and comparatively few do partake of it. If the first death overcome us before we overcome the devil, we must needs be hurt of the second death; and if we overcome not whilst we are young, death may prevent our being old, and so cut us off while we are in the devil's jaws. Oh who would run so desperate an hazard, considering to how many diseases, casualties, the young are subject!

2. If you do live to be old, yet consider,

1. The conquest over this wicked one will be the more difficult by how much the longer it is delayed. The proverb saith, A young saint, an old devil; but I am sure it is hard for a young devil to become an old saint. Dost thou think it will be so easy to cast out this strong man, when he hath had so much time to fortify himself? Wilt not thou every day become weaker and the enemy stronger, and must not then the victory be harder? It was much (saith St Chrysostom †) that Jonah, after three days' imprisonment, escaped out of the whale's belly; but it is much more to see an habituated sinner extricate himself out of the devil's snare. Sin and Satan are not like tenants at will, to be gone at a quarter's warning; the best wisdom is to crush the cockatrice in the egg. Oh take heed of accustoming thyself to the devil's yoke, since then it will not be a facile work to throw it off! Nay, further,

2. God may hereafter deny that grace to thee which now thou deniest to thyself; and then it will not be only difficult, but impossible to overcome him. It is a sad doom which God uttereth concerning Ephraim, 'He is joined to idols, let him alone.' What if God say so of thee, He is addicted to the devil's service, let him alone! It is but just when men give themselves over voluntarily, God should give them over judiciously, to Satan's power, and then there is no possibility of escaping out of his hands. Methinks it is very observable, that only he who first stepped into the pool, after the moving of the waters by the angel, was cured. *Post est occasio calva*, time must be taken by the forelock. Oh then make haste to list thyself a soldier under Christ's command, lest, if now thou

mayest, thou wilt not; when perhaps thou wouldst, thou shalt not.\*

3. If through divine grace thou shalt hereafter prevail against this wicked one, yet oh what grief and anguish of heart will it be then to thee, that thou wast so long bewitched with the devil's temptations! How bitterly doth David deprecate almighty God! 'Remember not against me the sins of my youth,' Ps. xxv. 7. No doubt, out of the deep sense he had of, and sorrow for, them. *Quæ fuerunt inania juventutis gaudia, hæc sunt acerba senectutis gravamina*; † the vanities of youth will be the vexation of old age, and if the one be a comedy, all upon pleasure, the other will prove a tragedy of sorrow.

4. Finally, the only fit and most acceptable time for this spiritual conflict and conquest is the time of youth. 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth' (saith the church), Lam. iii. 27. Indeed, then he is most able to bear it. This yoke, as St Hilary excellently, ‡ *non expectat frigescentis senectutis annos, nec mortuam jam aetatem pro vitiorum consuetudine*, is not for the weak shoulders of old men, who are so much the weaker because sin through custom is become stronger; yea, as St Ambrose § truly, *Quid potest habere laudis?* what thanks is it if, when our body is enervated through pleasures, and the cold frost of old age hath seized on it, we should then offer it to God as a sacrifice? It is St Basil's note, || that whereas *εἰς τὸ τέλος* is an inscription prefixed before many psalms, it is omitted before the fifteenth, which is a breviary of moral precepts, the practice whereof must not be deferred till the end of our lives. Indeed, *Mane*, as one wittily observeth, is the devil's verb, who tempts us to *continue still* in his service; but God's verb, ¶ who expects the *morning* of our youth to be devoted to him. What the fat was in the sacrifice, that is the strength of youth in God's service, very acceptable to him, oh let it be offered by us.

The truth is, a young Christian soldier is both most terrible in the devil's and amiable in God's eyes. 'The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell;' they are Christ's words to his church, Cant. ii. 14. Indeed, no smell so sweet in his nostrils as that which comes from the tender grapes; and withal (as St Bernard\*\* observeth) *Illic odor serpentes fugat*, venomous creatures cannot endure the scent; but so soon as the vines put forth, they remove, *Quod volo attendant novitii nostri*: a comfort to young saints who partake of that spirit whose first fruits the devils abhor. In one word, as it is God's honour and the devil's terror, so it will be our comfort.

\* *Festinare debet unusquisque ad Deum, ne, si dum potest noluerit, omnino cum voluerit non possit.*—Aug.

† Ambros.

|| Bas. M. de inserip.

‡ Hilar. in Ps. cxviii. lit. Beth. ¶ Qu. 'adverb.'?—Ed.

§ Ambros. ibid.

\*\* Bern. Serm. lx. in Cant.

\* Cl. Al. hort. ad gentes.

† Chrysost. ad pop. Antioch.

Assure thyself, O young man, it will be no grief of heart to thee in thy old age, that thou didst begin in youth to engage thyself in this sacred war against the wicked one. *Temporis preteriti bene impensi suavis est memoria.* Oh how sweet is the remembrance of youth well spent! What a joyful harvest doth the old man reap from the seed time of a religious youth, and with what abundant contentment doth he gather those ripe fruits of virtue which hudded forth in his youthful days! Oh, then, be wise, you young men, and instructed, you that are of tender years; for God's sake, nay, for your own sake, for his glory, and for your own comfort and safety, give no place to the devil, resist him speedily, resolutely, so shall you overcome him gloriously.

II. And now, if you be such young men as my text describeth, the instructions here given cannot but be welcome to you. No wonder that our apostle, by these qualifications, as by so many arguments, inciteth to the practice both of the precedent precept and the subsequent prohibition.

1. Love not the world, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

He that is given up to the world is wicked, and he that is entangled with it is weak. A strong saint is so far from loving, that he contemneth it, having his conversation in heaven, Philip. iii. 2. They that by waiting on the Lord renew their strength, mount up with wings as eagles, Isa. xl. 31, and so are free from death's snares. Worldly love will not suffer the word of God to abide in us. This diverts us from hearing and reading the word, as the farm and the oxen kept them in the gospel from coming to the feast; or, if not so, it keepeth us from loving and conforming to it, as the thorns in the parable did choke the good seed. Herod's lust of voluptuousness, Judas his lust of covetousness, would not let the word take place in their hearts, though it entered into their ears; indeed, it is impossible that the heart which is clogged with the weight of worldly love, should be lift up to God's commandments.

2. Again, if we will overcome the devil, we must not love the world, there being no stronger engine by which the devil gets, and keeps, possession of our hearts. When he would allure us to any sin, what are his enchantments but the pleasures of the world? When he would fright us from any duty, what are his weapons but the reproaches and persecutions of the world? So that, in order to this victory, nothing is more needful than the alienating of our affections from the world.

3. Love the brethren, because you are strong, and the love of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

Where there is strength of grace, there cannot but be fervent love, as to God, so to the brethren. It is for weak and sickly persons to be froward; none are

more prone to contention and faction than those that are weak in grace and knowledge; strong Christians are ever studious of amity and unity. Indeed, this is the way to increase our spiritual strength; and therefore, when St Paul adviseth to be strong, he presently addeth, 'Let all things be done in love,' 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14; and charity is called by him the bond of perfection, Col. iii. 14.

Again, if the word of God abide in us, we cannot but love one another. Charity is one of the principal fruits which this seed produceth, a lesson which this schoolmaster teacheth. Excellent to this purpose is that saying of Lactantius, *Da mihi hominem iracundum et uno verbo Dei reddam placidum, ut ovem.* This word turns leopards into kids, lions into lambs, and sweetly cements hearts together in one.

Once more, if we overcome the wicked one, we cannot but love our brethren. The devil is that envious one who soweth the tares of dissension. Though he preserveth unity in his own kingdom, yet he endeavoureth to create and frame discord among men; so that, as we cannot more gratify the devil than by malice, so neither can we better overcome him than by charity. The truth is, every envious and malicious person is the devil's slave, but the charitable Christian is his conqueror.

4. Having thus run through the reasons which our apostle allegeth why he wrote to fathers and young men, it now remaineth that we give a brief despatch to the last, which is, the reason why he wrote to little children, as it is expressed in the close of the thirteenth verse in those words, 'Because you have known the Father.'

In the handling whereof I shall briefly consider three things:

The quality specified; to know the Father.

The energy intimated; knowing the Father, is that which engageth not to love the world, but to love the brethren.

The congruity to the persons mentioned, 'Little children, you have known the Father.'

1. Having had occasion already, once and again, to insist upon this grace of divine knowledge, it will not be needful to enlarge; only know in brief that,

(1.) It is no other than an evangelical knowledge of God which our apostle here intends. To know the Father is to know God to be the Father of Christ, and in and through him, a merciful Father to all true Christians. It is one thing to know God as a creator, or as a lawgiver, and another to know him as a Father. So only the gospel revealeth him, and accordingly we come to know him.

(2.) It is less than an operative knowledge, so to know the Father as to depend on him for fatherly protection from all dangers, and provision of all necessaries; as to give him filial love, fear, service, subjection to all his fatherly commands, and submission to all his fatherly chastisements. 'They that know



thy name,' (saith the psalmist, Ps. ix. 10) 'will trust in thee,' and not only trust, but serve and honour thee.

(3.) It is not a gradual, but initial knowledge. It is not unworthy our observation, that the knowledge of God and Christ is a qualification attributed both to the fathers and the children. Indeed, God is both the  $\Lambda$  and the  $\Omega$ , the first and the last; and therefore he must be known by us in our first and last age: but yet these two knowledges differ in degrees. Old Christians have a deep draught, whereas little children have but a taste of this heavenly nectar; and therefore the expression is varied. Fathers are said to 'know him that is from the beginning,' as being well versed in the mysteries of Christian religion, whereas little children are only said to 'know the Father,' as having but some general apprehensions of God reconciled in Christ.

2. This knowledge of the Father, among many others, cannot but produce these two choice effects, to wit, contempt of the world, and the love of the brethren. On the one hand, as the twinkling stars are obscured by the light of the glorious sun, and therefore they disappear in the day-time, so the beams of this heavenly knowledge darken all creature excellencies in our apprehension, and consequently our estimation of, and affection towards, them must needs be diminished; on the other hand, this fountain of celestial knowledge cannot but send forth streams of love, and that, as chiefly towards the Father, so secondarily to all who are the children of this Father, and so our brethren.

3. This qualification of knowing the Father is very congruously attributed to the children. *Infantibus et pueris nihil magis necessarium quam ut patrem habeant et cognoscant*, saith Ferus well;\* nothing is more needful for infants and children than that they should have and know the Father. The weakness of little children needs the conduct and government of another; they cannot consult for their own safety and benefit, and therefore their parents undertake it for them. By this means it is that the child first taketh notice of his father and mother; according to that of the poet,

Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem :

and hence those pretty monosyllables by which father and mother are expressed, are first taught and learnt by their children so soon as they can speak. And surely, as it becometh little ones, so soon as they are capable, to know and own their parents, so is it an amiable excellency in them to attain some knowledge of God as their Father. Nothing more natural to children (when once reason begins to act in them) than to desire knowledge; no knowledge to which a child sooner taketh, than that of the father. But oh, how joyful and happy a thing is it when, through instruction, they begin to apprehend him who is the

\* Fer., Gualt., Dan., Lor., in loc.

father of us all; and this is the commendation of these children, that they know the Father.

To wind up this,

1. It is that which should be, in the first place, an item to parents, that they be careful to train up their children in the knowledge of the Father. O parents, you are industrious to provide wealth and riches for your children, but why are you not more solicitous to obtain grace and knowledge for them? You take a great deal of care to enrich their bodies, but why so little for the adorning of their souls? What is this, but (to use Plutarch's\* comparison) as if one should be very curious about the shoe, and neglect the foot, or exact in trimming the glove, whilst the hand is foul. Perhaps you endeavour that your children may attain some kind of knowledge, to wit, in the tongues, or arts and sciences, in a trade and calling; and herein you do well, learning being a far better portion than riches, without which the wealthiest heir is but an ass laden with gold. But, O parents, why stay you here? there is one thing more needful than either of the other, and that is, the knowledge of the Father. What difference is there between a pagan and a Christian parent, if your only care be to acquaint children with secular affairs, or educate them in philosophical studies? Oh let it not suffice that your children are instructed in human, whilst they are ignorant of divine, learning.

Tell me, I beseech you, is it not a sad thing, and yet I would to God it were not too common, that little children, through your negligent education, should swear so soon as they can speak, and learn to blaspheme that God whom yet they have not been taught to know. Such parents (saith St Chrysostom †) are worse than homicides, nay, than parricides; for these take away only the bodily life of their parents, but those do what in them lieth to cast the souls and bodies of their children into hell; and whilst, by generation, they were the instruments of their temporal life, through neglect of good education, they become at least the occasion of their eternal death. It is a doleful story which is reported by Gregory the Great to this purpose, ‡ of a child of five years old, which, being carelessly, or rather wickedly, brought up, was given to blaspheming God's holy name; and being, a little after, smitten with death, the poor child crieth to the father, Help, help, the Moors are come to take me away, and so blaspheming God, it died, no doubt to the horror and perplexity of the wicked father. It is a sad thing when children, in their old age, shall have cause to complain that their parents had no care to bring them up in learning; but is it not far more sad, that children in hell shall cry out against their parents, because they had no regard to instruct them in the knowledge of God?

Let, then, all parents be admonished of this neces-

\* Plut. *παιδιων ἀγωγῆς*.

† Chrysost. lib. iii. in laud. vitæ Monast.

‡ Gr. M. dial. lib. iv. cap. xviii.

sary duty which they owe to their children. Children are sometimes called *pignora*, pledges; so they are of God's love to us in bestowing them on us, so they ought to be of our love to God in consecrating them to him. They are compared to arrows, Ps. cxxvii. 4, as they are at first directed, so afterwards they fly. Oh let it be your endeavour that they may be directed upwards towards heaven by divine knowledge. It much conduced to Alexander's prowess and victory in his wars, that his father Philip caused him to be brought up (as it were from his cradle) in military discipline. Oh let it be the prudent piety of all parents to teach their children betimes the knowledge of the Christian warfare, and to that end to begin with the knowledge of the Father.

2. But, secondly, let me turn my counsel from the parents to the children, whom I cannot better bespeak than in David's words, Ps. xxxiv. 11, 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the knowledge and fear of the Lord.' You know your earthly parents; ay, but labour to know your heavenly. You know 'the fathers of your flesh; ay, but strive to know 'the Father of your spirits.' You are expert, it may be, in Homer's\* Odes, Virgil's Eclogues, Cicero's Orations; oh, but strive to get understanding in David's Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs, and the other plain books of holy writ. Manna was to be gathered in the morning. The orient pearl is generated of the morning dew; *aurora musis amica*, the morning is a friend to the muses. Oh 'remember thy Creator,' know him in the morning of thy childhood. When God had created the heavens and the earth, the first thing he did was to adorn the world with light, and separate it from the darkness. Happy is that child on whom the light of saving knowledge begins to dawn early. God in the law required the first-born, and the first fruits, so he doth still our first days to be offered to him. They are wisdom's own words, Prov. viii. 15, 'They that seek me early shall find me.' Where a rabbin observeth a  $\delta$  is added to the verb more than usual, which in numbering goeth for fifty. With this note that early seeking hath not only twenty, or thirty, but fifty, nay, indeed an hundred fold recompence attending on it. He that is long before he seeketh God, I will not say he shall not at all, but it may be long ere he find him. Oh begin early, whilst yet you are children, to seek the knowledge of God.

The better to induce you hereunto, consider, my good children,

1. You were in your very infancy, almost as soon as born, dedicated to the Father, being baptized in the name of the blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and will you not, now that you begin to have the use of your understanding, endeavour to know the Father? You are already his sworn servants and soldiers, will you be ignorant of him to whom you are sworn?

2. If you do not now begin to know the Father, you will be less docible hereafter. Alas! how hard is it to instil knowledge into old years. Can it be imagined that that tree which doth not bud nor blossom in the spring, should bring forth fruit in autumn, or should flourish in winter? Now, in your childhood, your wits are fresh, your apprehension quick. Oh employ them in studying and gaining the divine knowledge, so much the rather, because hereby you shall put to shame those ignorant old ones, who have lived long, and yet with the Ninevites know not the right hand from the left.

3. Your parents may prove unnatural and forsake you; however, they are mortal, and when death comes must leave you; but your Father in heaven liveth for ever, and if you know and serve him, he will love you, and take care for you, he will never leave you nor forsake you. The hen is not more tender of her chickens, nor the shepherd of his lambs, than this universal Father (as Clemens Alexandrinus calls him\*), is of his little ones, towardly and hopeful children. You may guess at God's love by Christ's respect, who commanded little children to be brought unto him, and blamed those that kept them from him. It was David's comfort, Ps. xxvii. 10, 'When my father and mother forsook me, then God took me up.' It may be yours, my little children; if you endeavour to know and love the Father, when your parents either cannot or will not help you, he both can and will provide for you.

Once more, your dear Redeemer and blessed Saviour Jesus Christ began himself betimes, and was so well skilled at twelve years old, that he disputed with the doctors in the temple; hereby giving you an example, which though it cannot be expected you should equalise, yet it is required you should follow. We find in the Gospel little children going before Christ, and following after him, with hosannas; and it is the praise of Jeroboam's child, 1 Kings xiv. 13, that there was found in him some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel. O little children, write after these copies, so much the rather, because with Jeroboam's child you may die early; and what a comfort will it be to yourselves and parents, if then there shall be found in you some knowledge, and love, and fear of your Father which is in heaven!

To end all, what remaineth but that all of all ages, fathers, young men, little children, make use of this scripture, as a looking-glass, whereby they may see what they are, at least what they should be, that they may be all, according to the gracious promise, Isa. liv. 13, 'taught of God,' from the greatest to the least, eldest to the youngest? And, then, the psalmist's exhortation will be readily embraced, Ps. cxlviii. 12, 'Young men and maids, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord from this time forth for evermore.' Amen.

\* Qu. 'Horace's'?—Ed.

\* Cl. Al. Pædag. lib. i. cap. v.



## SERMON XXXIX.

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.—1 JOHN II. 15–17.*

THE subject of this scripture is one of the chiefest and most needful lessons in all practical divinity, since it is *removens prohibens*, a document of removing that which is one of the greatest hindrances in the exercises of Christianity. Indeed, what the stumbling-block is to the traveller in the way, the weight to the runner in his race; or, to use St Austin's comparison, lime-twigs are to the bird in its flight;\* that is the love of the world to a Christian in his course, either wholly diverting him from, or greatly entangling him in, or forcibly turning him out of it. This is one of the fetters which keepeth so many from entering into the path of piety; this is one of those suckers which hinder others from growth in holiness; finally, this is that which, like a contrary wind to the ship, beateth back many from their former profession. The truth is (as Calvin well observeth on this place†), till the heart be purged from this corruption, the ear will be deaf to divine instructions. Hercules could never conquer Antæus, *donec à terrâ matrem levasset*, till he had lifted him up above his mother earth; no more can the Spirit of grace subdue us to the obedience of the gospel, till he hath lifted up our hearts from earthly love. Heavenly truths glide off from carnal minds, as water from a spherical body. No wonder, then, if the apostle Paul, exciting the Hebrews to 'run the race which is set before them,' Heb. xii. 1, adviseth them to 'lay aside every weight,' to wit, of worldly care. And here the apostle John, intending chiefly in this whole epistle to advance a Christian conversation, endeavours in these words to take men off from worldly affections: 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world,' &c.

The discourse of these words moveth upon two principal wheels, namely,

A command peremptorily inhibiting, which is

Propounded in the beginning of the fifteenth verse, 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world.'

Expounded in the sixteenth verse, 'All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.'

An argument strongly enforcing, which is drawn from two considerations:

The one in regard of worldly love, its direct contrariety to that which is divine, as it is

\* Est qued ad profectum amatur, et est quod ad impedimentum amatur. Quod ames in terrâ impedimentum vicus est pennarum spiritualium, &c.—*Aug. de Diversis*, Serm. 114.

† Calv. in loc.

Asserted in the end of the fifteenth verse, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;'

Proved in the end of the sixteenth verse, 'For it is not of the Father, but of the world.'

The other in regard of the world itself, its fleeting instability, which is

Affirmed in the beginning of the seventeenth verse, 'And the world passed away, and the lusts thereof.'

Amplified from its contrary, the permanent felicity of the religious, in the end of the verse, 'But he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.'

So that though the grand wheels of this period are but two, yet we find many lesser wheels, yea, *rotam in rotâ*, every wheel having another within it.

The first main wheel is the prohibition, and in that is another wheel, the exposition. The second wheel is the argument, and in that two wheels, the double motive, each of which hath a wheel within it; whilst the first motive is backed with a probation, and the second with an illustration. May that blessed Spirit of grace vouchsafe to drive the chariot of my discourse, which shall run in order upon these wheels, and then I doubt not but we shall attain that which is (I trust) the goal of my preaching and your hearing, namely, our reformation and salvation.

The prohibition is that which I am to begin with; and that,

1. As propounded in these words, 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world.'

This is in order the sixth step of that walking in the light, which (I have heretofore told you) is the chief design of this epistle to delineate: the first, whereof is a sorrowful confession of sin past, chap. i. 9; the second, a cordial forsaking it for the time to come, chap. i. 3; the third, an obediential keeping the commandment, ver. 6; the fourth, a sedulous imitation of Christ, ver. 10; the fifth, a Christian love of the brethren; and now, the sixth is an alienation of our head \* from the world: 'Love not the world,' &c.

What the intent of this prohibition is will best appear by inquiring what is the proper notion of the word *world* in this place. Not to trouble myself and you with giving an account of its several acceptations in sacred writ, be pleased to know to our present purpose, that (to use St Austin's similitude †) as an horse is taken sometimes for the walls and rooms which constitute the house, and sometimes for the family which inhabiteth the house, so by the world is

\* Qu. 'heart'?—ED.

† Aug. in Johan.

meant sometimes the things, and sometimes the persons, of the world; and both these constructions expositors make use of here.

Some \* by the *world* understand the men of the world, and so conceive that which followeth 'the things of the world' to be distinct from 'the world,' and that this act of love is here forbidden about a double object.

Others † by the world understand the things of the world, and accordingly conceive the latter to be an explication of the former. That whereas when he said, 'Love not the world,' it might have been inquired, 'What, O blessed apostle, is this world which we must not love?' To prevent this objection, he presently addeth, 'nor the things of the world.'

1. The former of these interpretations is neither improbable or unprofitable, and therefore I shall not wholly pass it by: 'Love not the world,' that is, love not the men of the world. For the right understanding of which prohibition observe these three things.

(1.) Though *world* be here taken for the men in it, yet this must be construed not γενικός, but ιδιωτός, generally for *all* men, but with restriction to *wicked* and *ungodly* men. For in this sense it is frequently used by this writer, as it were easy to instance in several places of his Gospel, John i. 10, xv. 18, and in some of this epistle, especially in the first verse of the next chapter, wherein I shall (God willing) enlarge upon this appellation, as given to the wicked. For the present it may suffice to know, that if we here interpret the *world* of persons, it must be confined only to the unregenerate and ungodly of the world.

(2.) This world of the wicked men, which we are not to love, is not to be understood of the men, but their wickedness. When the devil is said to be the 'prince of this world,' by our Saviour, John xii. 20; and the 'god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4, by St Paul, it is no doubt intended, as only of the wicked of the world, so in regard of their wickedness; and in the same restraint it must be here taken, when we are enjoined not to love them.‡ Look as when the apostle Paul forbids us to be 'conformed to the world,' Rom. xii. 2, his meaning is that we should not conform to their sinful manners, vicious practices. So when the apostle John forbids us to love the world, if we refer it to men, it is to be understood as intending to forbid a love to their sins, not to their nature. The truth is, as men they are the works of God's hand, and so to be loved on his score; they are our own flesh, and so to be loved upon our own account; only as wicked they are the devil's children, and so not to be loved, but hated. Very observable to this purpose is that expression of St Paul to the Ephesians, chap. v. 11, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,' he meaneth, have no fellowship with the workers; but yet he very aptly saith the works, since

it is in reference to their works that we ought to avoid fellowship with the workers.

(3.) Once more, we must distinguish a double love, to wit, *amor benevolentia, et complacentia*, a love of benevolence whereby we wish well to, and a love of complacency whereby we take delight in, another. The love of benevolence is commanded, and that in regard of wicked men, toward whom we must exercise compassion, for whom we must make supplication, desiring and endeavouring their eternal welfare. But the love of complacency is forbidden, since we ought to avoid, nay, abhor all familiar society with the ungodly; and so this *love* not may very fitly be expounded by that *have no fellowship*; not that all kind of commerce and communion with the wicked is prohibited, but that this commerce must be a matter of necessity, not of choice. We cannot but live among them, but we must not delight in them; we may upon just occasion have society, but we must not love the company of the wicked. This is that precept whereof holy David hath set us a pattern, when he saith, Ps. xvi. 2, 'All my delight is in the saints, and the excellent of the earth;' again, Ps. cxix. 63, 'I am a companion of all them that fear thee;' and again, ver. 115, 'Depart from me, you evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.' Upon which the gloss well, *Abigit tanquam muscas molestas*, he driveth them away as so many troublesome flies. Thus must we keep at a distance from wicked men, and shun all familiar intimacy with them.

And surely would we seriously consider the great danger of love to, and familiarity with, the wicked, not only in regard of suspicion that we are as they, which brings a scandal upon our names, but of infection and destruction, since we can hardly escape without being involved in their iniquities and calamities; it could not but be a strong inducement to the observation of this apostolical canon, 'Love not the world,' that is, the wicked men of the world.

But not to insist on this exposition, proceed we to the other, which to me seemeth more genuine, and that because both the distribution of this world's love into several sorts of lusts, and likewise the arguments by which it is dissuaded, especially that of the world's passing away with its lusts, are most congruous to this latter construction, 'Love not the world, *that is*, not the things of this world.'

In the unfolding whereof I shall plainly proceed by these five steps:

1. When we are forbidden to love the world, and the things of it, it is to be restrained to this sublunary and terrestrial world. *Mundi nomine intellige quicquid ad presentem vitam spectat*, so Calvin aptly,\* by the things of the world we are to understand those things which belong to this present life. We cannot have a better expositor of St John than St Paul, and then the τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ will be the same with the τὰ ἐπι

\* Zanch. in loc.

† Didym. ibid.

‡ Si naturam spectes, diligendi: si vitia non item.—Justin.

\* Calv. in loc.



τῶς γῆς, elsewhere, Col. iii. 2, 'The things of the world,' that is, 'the things which are upon the earth,' those things which appertain to our animal and sensible life, in opposition to heavenly and spiritual things; and if you please to distinguish the *world*, and the *things* of it, you may, with one upon the place, by the world understand this life, or our abode in this world; and by the things of it all those contentments which this life can afford to us.

2. It is not unfitly taken notice of by Ferus,\* that the apostle doth not say, *Exite mundo*, but *Nolite diligere mundum*, leave the world, but do not love it. Excellent to this purpose is that of St Gregory, † *Sic teneamus ea quæ sunt hujusmodi, ut tamen per ea non teneamur*, we must so possess the things of this world, that we be not possessed by them. Indeed, for the leaving of the world, and the things of it, we must have a just and special call, or else it becomes sinful; we must not go out of this world at our own pleasure, but wait God's leisure, saying with good old Simeon, 'Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' *Sapiens non debet fugere vitã, sed exire*, said Seneca, A wise man must not break prison doors, only be willing to go forth when they are set open. We cannot stay longer in, and we must not go sooner out of, this world, than God pleaseth. We must not needlessly divest ourselves of those comforts which God affords us in this life; since it were both unthankfulness to the giver, whom we basely undervalue by casting away his gifts, and an injury to ourselves the receivers, who hereby should be disenabled from being so serviceable as we might in our generation. That forsaking of 'house, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, lands,' to which Christ promiseth 'an hundred fold and eternal life,' Mat. xix. 29, is when it is 'for his name's sake,' so that either we must deny his name or lose life, and leave these secular enjoyments, otherwise the general prohibition is not *possess not*, but *love not*.

3. It is very aptly observed by St Austin, ‡ that the apostle doth not say, *Nolite uti mundo*, but *Nolite diligere mundum*, Do not use the world, but do not love it. He that, not loving the world, useth it, useth it as not abusing it, inasmuch as he useth it not for itself, but in order to that which he loveth, as the father excellently enlargeth. So long as we live in, we cannot but have use of, the world, and the things in it; § we stand in need of them, we cannot subsist without them, and consequently not only may, but must, make use of them. But as Beda well glosseth, || *Utamur mundo ad necessitatem et non ad voluntatem*, ¶ use the world for the supplying your necessities, but not for satisfying your lust. With Gideon's three

hundred soldiers, Judges vii. 5, 6, we may lap the waters of this world with our tongues, but we must not with the rest bow down our bodies to drink of them. One hath wittily observed of the three ages of man, that children creep on all four, being unable to stand of themselves, young men go on two legs, and old men on three, being necessitated to use their staff; it may be here applied, wicked men are wholly carried downwards to this world. The saints in heaven trample upon the world, the godly whilst in this world use it only as a staff for their necessary support. Excellent to this purpose is that of St Austin concerning these temporal things,\* *His tanquam tabulã in fluctibus bene utendo cavebimus*, we must look upon them as so many planks in the waves, which we neither rest upon as firm, nor yet cast away as needless, but use as helps to carry us to the shore.

4. It is observed by Suidas, † that the Greek word ἀγαπᾶν (which is the word in the text), hath two significations, the one whereof is general, and the same with φιλεῖν, noting only an ordinary affection; the other special, amounting to as much as, ἀρκεῖναι τίνι καὶ μηδὲν πλεῖον ἐπιζητεῖν, to be so pleased with any object, that we desire nothing else. According to this, that note of St Austin upon the text is very apposite: *Non te prohibet deus amare ista, sed non diligere ad beatitudinem*, it is not every kind of love which is here prohibited, but so to love them as to make them our chiefest good.

For the further explicating of which, be pleased to know that,

1. Love, as an ancient hath well defined it, is *delectatio cordis ad aliquod, per desideriam currens, per gaudium acquiescens*, ‡ the enlargement of the heart towards any object, so as to run to it by desire, and rest in it by delight. So that, indeed, love is a compounded mixed affection, made up of desire in craving, and joy in having the object we love. And accordingly, some critics observe, of the verb ἀγαπᾶν, here used, that it is as much as ἀγαν πύθεισθαι, or ἀγαν πάυσθαι, to be very earnest after and pleased with that which is beloved.

2. It is not unlawful to look upon the world, and the things in it, as objects of our love, both in regard of desire and delight. When our blessed Saviour commands us to pray, Mat. vi. 12, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' by which synecdochically all temporal conveniences are intended, he doth hereby plainly intimate, that we may desire them, prayer being an expression of desire. When Solomon saith, Eccles. ii. 24 (and that not in the person of an epicure), 'There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour,' what doth he but insinuate, that to delight ourselves in earthly things is allowable. Indeed, whatever is good may justly be

\* Fer. in loc. † Gr. M. hom. xxxvi. in Evang.

‡ Aug. lib. v. contra Julian.

§ Cuncta temporalia usu non affectu possideamus.—Gr. M. in Ezek. hom. xx. lib. ii.

|| Beda in loc.

¶ Qu. 'voluptatem' ?—Ed.

\* Aug. mus lib. vi. cap. 14. † Suid. in dict. ἀγαπᾶν.

‡ Lib. de substantiã dilectionis. in Aug. T. iv.

the object of love, and consequently, when absent, of desire, when present, of delight; so that inasmuch as there is a goodness, and that originally implanted by God, in those things which are the works of his hands, they cannot but rationally attract our love.

3. But then, lastly, there is a great deal of difference between *ordinata charitas*, and *inordinata cupiditas*, an ordinate charity, and an inordinate love, and though that is commendable, this is to be condemned. So that the true meaning of this prohibition will best appear in two propositions.

(1.) Love not the world, nor the things of the world, that is, when you want them, desire not inordinately after them. Desire them we may, but not,

[1.] In an unjust way, so to covet these things as to seek them *per fasque nefasque*, by indirect and unlawful means. That we choose rather to break the rules of the world, than to want the things of the world, is sinful and abominable. The streams of our affection may move towards the world; but then it must be in the right channel, in God's way, only in the use of those means which he alloweth us.

[2.] With an undue measure. So to long for anything in this world, as that we will not be content without it; like Rachel, that cried, Gen. xxx. 1, 'Give me children or I die,' nor yet content with it; like the horse-leech that still crieth, 'Give, give,' Prov. xxx. 16, is immoderate, and consequently inordinate. The stream of our affections, after this world, must not rise too high so as to overflow the banks.

[3.] To an unfitting end; when we crave the things of this world upon base and sordid accounts, asking (as St James saith, chap. iv. 3), 'to consume them upon our lusts,' our love is exorbitant; the stream of our affection toward the world must not turn aside into by-creeks, but run into the main ocean of God's glory.

(2.) Love not the world, nor the things of it; that is, when you have them, delight not inordinately in them. Delight in them we may, but not *sine Deo*, without God; so as if we enjoy them, it matters not for God's presence, *supra Deum*, above God, so as to give the pith, the marrow, the cream of our affections to them, only *propter Deum*, in and for God. Delight in them we may, but as the cisterns, not the fountains of our good, as they may be means, not as the chief end wherein our bliss consists. In one word, all the things of this world, as they are benefits conferred by God on us, and as they may be helps leading us to God, may be loved by us; but not under any other notion, for then it is irregular, and cometh within the compass of this prohibition.

5. Lastly, this of St Johu, 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world,' may very well be expounded by that of St Paul, Gal. vi. 14, 'The world is crucified to me, and I to the world;' and if so, then there is more intended than expressed. This negative will include an affirmative, love not; that is,

contemn, disdain, scorn, hate the world, and the things of it, when they would alienate thy heart from God. Indeed, then is the world crucified to a Christian, when it is to his heart what a crucified dead carcase is to his eyes, to wit, odious and loathsome. Then is a Christian crucified to the world, when he is as unwilling to move according to the solicitations of the world, as a crucified man is unable to stir hand or foot; and he that is thus affected, is so far from being in love with the world, or addicted to, that he is estranged from, yea, enraged against it. And thus I have given you a short, and yet a just, account of the design and latitude of this prohibition. To wind it up in a brief application.

You see the sin forbidden; now view your practice. I would to God that all, even the best of us, had not just reason to charge the guilt of this sin upon ourselves. Worldly love is an epidemical disease, and such as good men sometimes fall sick of; even they who would not enjoy this world with the loss of a better, are yet unwilling to enjoy the other world with the loss of this. Gladly they would have the honey and milk of Canaan, and yet loath they are to part with the onions and garlic of Egypt. Indeed, some there are who rail upon this world as a place of trouble and disquietment, but yet still they love; like the buyer who saith, 'It is naught, it is naught; but when he is gone, he boasteth,' Prov. xx. 14, to wit, how good a pennyworth he hath got. If you ask any man whom he loveth best? his answer will be, God; and yet if many, nay, most men would put the question seriously to themselves, the answer must be, the world; yea, he that hath made the best progress in learning this lesson, will find upon due search, that he loveth the world too much.

The better to help you in this inquiry, be pleased to observe these ensuing particulars.

1. Would you know your affection? Take notice of your meditation. David affirmeth of the blessed man, Ps. i. 2, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord;' and he confirmeth it by this *medium*, 'and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' It is his assertion concerning himself, Ps. exix. 97, 'Oh how I love thy law;' and the proof followeth, 'It is my meditation all the day.' The truth is, *Ubi amor, ibi oculus*, where there is fervency of love, there is frequency of thoughts. Oh then, consider what is it your thoughts most run upon, what are your morning and evening meditations. Do not the things of this world lie down in the evening, and rise up with you in the morning; nay, walk with you all the day, whilst your minds are still busied either about getting, or keeping, or increasing them? and if so, can you acquit yourselves from this inordinate love.

2. Would you discern your affection, view your election. Our love, saith St Austin,\* is never so fully tried as when two objects are proposed, whereof the

\* Aug. in loc.



one must be embraced and the other refused, the one taken and the other left. Whilst two men walk together, you cannot tell whom the dog followeth; but when the time of parting cometh, then the dog manifesteth who is his master. Put the case, O Christian, to thyself, what if the absence of God's love, and the enjoying of the world's comforts, come in competition, which wouldst thou cleave to? Certainly *eligere* and *diligere* go together, that which is thy choice is thy love. Oh how many with Demas forsake the faith, that they may embrace this present world! 2 Tim. iv. 10.

3. Would you find out the mistress's haunt? Trace her handmaids. Fear and grief are the two attendants upon love. The poet saith,

Res est solliciti plena timoris amor.

*Doloris* will stand in the verse too, and is as true of the things. Love is full both of fears and tears, afraid lest it should lose, and troubled when it hath lost, its beloved object. How solicitous was David for Absalom's safety, and how perplexed at the news of his ruin! And whence this but from his endeared affection towards him? When Christ wept for Lazarus, the Jews presently cried out, 'See how he loved him!' John xi. 36. And when we see men so fearful of death, which taketh them out of this world, and of all those evils which spoil them of these present contentments; yea, when we behold them so exceeding sorrowful and heavy under outward crosses and losses, may we not justly say concerning them, See how they loved this world and the things of it!

4. Would you know the frame of your hearts? Observe the language of your lips. *Ubi amor, ibi lingua*, as well as *oculus*; not only the eye, but the tongue, are guided by the heart: 'Out of the abundance of the heart' (saith our blessed Saviour) 'the mouth speaketh.' And may it not be said to many as the maid did to Peter, Mat. xxvi. 73, 'Thy speech betrayeth thee,' whilst their communication is earthly and sensual, chiefly, nay, only, about inferior objects? Surely the things we are most frequent in talking of we take most delight in. How great lovers must they be of the world whose discourse tends to nothing else; yea, even upon holy days, when they rest from servile works, yet they will not cease from secular words! Indeed, the worldling's breath savoureth of earth; you may trace his tongue from the market to the exchange, thence to the quay or wharf, thence to the custom-house, and thence to the warehouse, but seldom to the church. And doth it not plainly argue the vessel of the heart is full of the liquor of worldly love, when it runs so constantly over in worldly language?

5. The fervour of our contention clearly manifests the intention of our love. It is St James his question and answer, chap. iv. 1, 'Whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from the lusts that war in your members?' And St

Austin\* is positive: *Qui de mundo contendit, perspicue ostendit, quod illum diligit*, men do not use to contend about what they care not for; whilst your emulations, strifes, quarrels are so great and fierce one with another about worldly matters, it strongly argueth they have possession of your hearts. She for whom the gallant adventures his life in the field, is very probably concluded to be his mistress. Surely the world commands thy heart when it engageth thee in litigious quarrels.

6. Lastly, You may very rationally judge of your affections by your actions, your love by your care, your delight by your service. When we read that Jacob served an hard apprenticeship to Laban, and that no less than fourteen years for the gaining of Rachel, we may certainly infer that he loved her greatly. Men would never lay out their time and strength so incessantly in the world's drudgery, were she not mistress of their affections; yea, which doth the more fully proclaim their love, their labour is a pleasure. They are never in their element but when like the fish they are swimming in these waters, or like the mole they are digging in the earth.

By all these considerations we may be able to discern whether our love be not inordinate towards this world and the things thereof; and therefore such as we ought to be deeply sensible of, affected with, and humble for.

And now what remaineth but that to this word of conviction I annex a word of debortation, that we all endeavour to wean our hearts from the love of this world? Oh hearken, and again I say hearken, to this spiritual and heavenly voice (as it is called by St Cyprian †), 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world.' Indeed, as Seneca saith of sorrow, I may say of love, I do not require that you should not love it at all; but I earnestly entreat, take heed that you love it not too much. The truth is, our affections, in regard of worldly matters, are very prone to excess. In heavenly things it is impossible to exceed, in earthly things it is difficult not to exceed. Our grief quickly degenerateth into anguish, our fear into trembling, our desire into impatience, our delight into jollity, and our love into dotage. Oh therefore be wise to watch the outgoings of your hearts after worldly objects, and remember that as it is of the two best when brotherly kindness erreth on the right hand by loving too much, so when worldly love offends on the left hand by loving too little.

Æcumenius upon the text ‡ conceiveth that *τῶντα ὡς παιδίοις λέγει*, the apostle writeth these things as to children, who are most apt to be taken up with sensual objects; but doubtless, as one well glosseth, § *Optimè omnibus congruit*, there are none of any age but stand in need of it. Beware that you be not engaged and fettered with worldly love. We read con-

\* Aug. in loc.

† Cyp. de discipl. et habitu.

‡ Æcumen. in loc.

§ Justin. ibid.

cerning the living creatures mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. i. 7, that the soles of their feet were like the soles of a calf's foot.' The Chaldee paraphrase readeth it 'like round feet.' The feet are an emblem of our affection; and it is observed of spherical bodies, that if you set them upon the ground, they only touch it in one point. So should our affections touch this world; not too much cleaving to or leaning on it. Dioscorides maketh mention of an herb which he calleth the Indian leaf, and observeth that it groweth in moorish, fenny places: *Aque sine ullâ radice innatans*, swimming in the water without taking any root in the bottom. Let this herb be our emblem. Whilst we live in, let us not love, the world; and though we make use of it to swim in for a time, let not our hearts take root by an inordinate love.

The main dissuasives from this sin we shall meet with in the text; only consider for the present, that this worldly love is unreasonable, injurious, ungrateful, and unchristian.

1. It is unreasonable. There are two eminent laws of love which are directly broken by this practice: the one is *simili gaudere*, the other is *diligentem diligere*, like loveth like, and love requireth love. But, alas! when we love the world, we love that which is unlike; there being no proportion between our noble souls and this world's good. Indeed, our souls were made after the divine image and similitude, and therefore not made for the love of this inferior world. Besides, when we love the world, we love that which, as it doth not give, so neither can it repay, love. At the best it is only capable of serving, not of loving, us; and why should we so pervert the nature of love as to love the world? But further,

2. It is injurious to ourselves, as well as incongruous to love, since by loving the world it becometh our enemy. It seems strange, yet it is a truth, the world is only a foe to them that love her. If we use

her, she is an obsequious servant; but if we love her, she is a malicious enemy. It is observed of the shadow, *sequentem fugit, fugientem sequitur*, if you follow it, it flieth from you; if you fly from it, it followeth after you. It is proportionably true of the world, if you contemn it, it will fear you; if you love it, it will domineer over you; and that known proverb of fire and water, may justly be applied to the things of the world, they are good servants, but bad masters. Add to this,

3. It is ungrateful to God, as well as injurious to ourselves. All these things of the world are the largesses of God's bounty, the streams of his goodness; and is it not an odious ingratitude to doat upon the gift, and neglect the donor? Very apposite to this purpose is St Austin's similitude,\* If an husband, being in a far country, should send a ring to his spouse out of his ardent affection to her, would he not, might he not, justly take it ill at her hands, if she should forget her husband, and fall in love with the token? Thus do we when we cast God behind our backs, and set our eyes upon this world.

Finally, it is unchristian, there being nothing more unbeseeming a Christian profession, than a worldly conversation. Being Christians, we profess the faith and hope of a better world; we entitle ourselves the children of God, and shall we live and love as the children of this world? It is our Saviour's argument to his disciples, Mat. vi. 33, 'After these things do the Gentiles seek,' and because they do, we should not, at leastwise not as they do it, with such immoderate affection. And, therefore, whilst mammonists like ravens feed on garbage; like the lapwing, make their nest in ordure; or like beetles, never sing but in a bed of dung; let us have higher thoughts, nobler desires, purer joys, learning of this holy apostle, not to love the world, nor the things of the world.

\* Aug. in loc.

## SERMON XL.

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*—1 JOHN II. 15, 16.

THE passions of the soul in their own nature are neither, in their exercise are either, morally good or bad. Look as a painter's colours, according to the several pictures which they draw, represent a chaste matron and a wanton strumpet; or as the winds, according to the several corners whence they blow, serve to drive the ship forward and backward; so the affections, according to the object whereabout they are conversant, become either helps or hindrances, virtues or vices; yea, what the astrologers say of the planet Mercury in the horoscope of man's nativity, if it be

in conjunction with a fortunate planet it is the better, if with an ominous the worse, is more truly affirmed of the passions: when they are joined to good objects, they advance virtue; and when to bad, they increase vice.

No wonder, then, if the holy Scripture take so much care about regulating our affections. Indeed, the Stoics would banish and extirpate them, and therefore say to them as Abimelech to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 16, 'Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we;' but the Christian religion would only confine, or rather



refine, them by defining their proper objects. There is no need of draining up these waters, only of diverting them into their right channel, of plucking them up, only planting them in a good soil. We must not use them as Joshua was to deal with the Amalekites, Exod. xvii. 11, wholly cut them off; but as he did by the Gibeonites, Josh. ix. 23, make them 'hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the house of God.' Indeed, as one wittily, man fallen is the anagram of man created, his affections (like letters) misplaced, so that there is no need of blotting them out, only placing them in their right order.

Upon this account it was that we find in sacred writ both precepts and prohibitions, commands and caveats, exhortations and dehortations, in reference to the same affections, sometimes in the same verse; so Christ to the disciples, Fear not, but fear; to the women at the cross, Weep not, but weep. Oft-times in the same chapter, as in this concerning the affection of love, if you cast your eyes in the foregoing verses, you shall find those two objects which we are to love: God, ver. 5, and our brother, ver. 9; and here in this verse that single, though comprehensive object which we must not love, 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world,' &c.

Having despatched the general proposition in the beginning of the fifteenth verse, we are now, according to the proposed method, to descend to the particular exposition, as it is set down in the former part of the sixteenth, 'All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.'

This clause, which I call the exposition, you see is a distribution, intended no doubt for a further and fuller explication of that prohibition; but whether of the object or the act, is somewhat questionable, since on the one hand the word *world* refers to the object, and on the other the word *lust* refers to the act. Interpreters conceive that lust is taken metonymically for the object lusted after, and so account it a distribution of the object, but withal it is of the object in reference to the act. And when I observe that this *all* is positively denied to be of the Father, I think it more rational to construe this *πάν* by *πάσα ἐπιθυμία*, *all* to be every lust that is in the world, and so take it as a distribution of the act, discovering the several channels in which worldly love runneth.

It is inquired by the schoolmen† whether this distribution do completely enumerate the causes of all sin, and it is affirmatively resolved. Calvin, upon the text, conceiveth it not much material whether it be exact or no. No doubt these are the principal, and all sins may some way or other be reduced to one of these.

If you please, take a short view of the several referencies of these lusts, whereby they are differentiated one from another.

\* Concupiscentia pro re concupiscibili.—Zanch. in loc.

† Cl Alens cum aliis.

Serrarius upon the text\* hath thus ranked them: that good which is immoderately desired, is such as is really received into us, about which is conversant the lust of the flesh; or which is only transmitted by species to the sight, and so the object of the 'lust of the eyes;' or which is neither received by itself, or by species into us, but is altogether without us, and to this tends the pride of life.

Alexander Hales,† out of St Austin, goeth another, and in some respects a contrary, way, asserting exorbitant lust to be either about *bonum inferius*, some inferior sensual good, which is the lust of the flesh; or *exterius*, some external, visible good, which is the lust of the eyes; or *interius*, some inward, opinionated good, which is the pride of life.

Aquinas distinguisheth‡ the inordinate appetite of man to be after good, either as considered absolutely, or as it is attended with difficulty. The former is the inordination of that which is called the concupiscible appetite; and this is either in respect of those things that please the body, which is *concupiscentia naturalis*, the natural desire, but in the excess, the lust of the flesh, or of those things which by sight delight the imagination, which is *concupiscentia animalis*, an animal desire, and in the excess, the lust of the eyes. The latter is the irregularity of the irascible appetite, and is the pride of life.

Some not unfitly allude to that distinction of sins into carnal, spiritual, and of a mixed nature. Those sins which take sensible delight in sensible objects are purely carnal, and these belong to the lusts of the flesh; those which take mental delight in mental objects are purely spiritual sins, and belong to the pride of life; those which take an inward delight in outward objects are of a mixed nature, and belong to the lust of the eyes.

The most plain and usual reference of them is of the lust of the flesh to sensual pleasures, of the lust of the eyes to riches, and of the pride of life to honours; and so the voluptuous, covetous, and ambitious, are the sinners guilty of these lusts. This Grotius§ looketh upon as the genuine meaning, and so much the rather, because he conceiveth this sentence to be borrowed from the ancient Hebrews, whence Pythagoras received it, and from him Clynias, who mentioneth these three as the cause of that injustice among men, *φιληδόνια*, *πλεονεξία*, *φιλοδοξία*, correspondent to which is that of Philo on the decalogue, asserting it is the fountain of all wars among men to be *ἐπιθυμία ἢ χρεματισμῶν, ἢ δόξης, ἢ ἡδονῆς*, the evil lust either of wealth, or honour, or pleasure. But what the large extent, and withal the principal intent, of these severals are, will best appear in the distinct handling of them.

The number, you see, is threefold; and before I go further, I shall a while descend upon them jointly.

If you cast your eyes upon the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of St James, you shall find a tripartite

\* Serrar. in loc.

† Aquin. ta. 2æ. 2, 8, art. 5.

‡ Al. Al. pt. 2a. 2, 159.

§ Vide Grot. in loc.

division of worldly wisdom into earthly, sensual, and devilish, to which methinketh very fitly corresponds this division of worldly love, the lust of the flesh being sensual, the lust of the eyes earthly, and the pride of life devilish.\*

We read in the foregoing verses of three ages of men to whom our apostle wrote, namely, children, young men, and fathers; and each of these lusts is especially incident to each of these ages. Men in the beginning of their days are most prone to the lusts of the flesh, in the progress of their age to the pride of life, and in their old age, to the covetous lust of the eyes.

In the close of the fourteenth verse of this chapter, St John speaketh of 'overcoming the wicked one,' that is, the devil; and if you would know what are the chief temptations with which he doth assault, and which if we repel we overcome him, they are here presented to us. The fruit with which he tempted our first parents in the garden, Gen. iii. 6, was 'good for food:' that was a lust of the flesh; 'pleasant to the sight,' and so came in the lust of the eyes; 'and to be desired to make one wise,' and that was the pride of life. After four thousand years' experience, the devil could not find out better weapons, and therefore with these he sets upon the second Adam in the wilderness, tempting him to the lust of the flesh, when he would have him turn the stones into bread to satisfy his hunger; to the lust of the eyes, saith St Austin,† when he bid him east himself down out of curiosity; say others, and more probably (with the leave of that reverend father), when he shewed him all the kingdoms and glory of the world; and to the pride of life when he persuaded him to east himself down, which was no doubt for that end, to lift him up with arrogant presumption.

With these temptations it is that he doth still assault the children of men, so that I may not unfitly compare them to Solomon's threefold cord, by which he draws men to iniquity; to the flesh-hook with three teeth, by which the priest's servant robbed the Lord's sacrifice; to Hippomene's three golden apples, by which he endeavoured to hinder Atalanta's race; to Joab's three darts, by which he wounded Absalom to the heart; to the Chaldeans' three troops,‡ (with St Bernard) by which they plundered Job of his goods; or to St John's three unclean spirits, Rev. xvi. 13, crawling upon and defiling us.

It is Christ's call to his spouse, Cant. iv. 8, 'Come with me from Lebanon, look from the top of Amaná, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.' Ghislerius understandeth by these three mountains§ these three lusts: the pride of life, by the mountain of Lebanon, which is exceeding high, and upon which grow the tall cedars; by the top of Amaná, from whence they might

see a great way, the lust of the eyes; by the top of Hermon, a fruitful hill, the lust of the flesh; and these are the mountains-on which wicked men range like leopards, and the dens of those lions, the devils.

These are those lusts which oppose the three grand designs of our life, our own salvation, others' good, and God's glory. Whilst the lust of the flesh warreth against our soul, the lust of the eyes maketh us uncharitable to others, and the pride of life robs God of his glory. Correspondent to these three great sins, it seems not improbable that God hath appointed those three sore judgments: \* the famine, as a punishment of the lust of the flesh; the plague (which causeth blotches and sores), of the lust of the eyes; and the sword (which bringeth nations low), of the pride of life.

As armour against these three darts, the papists superstitiously use a threefold anointing in baptism, to wit, of the loins, the breast, and the head; but (which is far better) the grace of God teacheth to 'live soberly,' in opposition to the lust of the flesh; 'justly,' in opposition to the lust of the eyes; 'and godly' (which is a walking humbly with God), in opposition to the pride of life. And which is best of all, our blessed Saviour prescribes three duties (which by the schools are made the three parts of satisfaction): fasting, as a remedy for the lust of the flesh; alms, as an eye-salve for the lust for the eyes; and prayer, as an antidote against the pride of life.

To draw yet nearer. These three are 'all that is in the world;‡' they are the world's cursed trinity; according to that of the poet,

Ambitiosus honos, opes, et fœda voluptas;  
Hæc tria pro trino numine mundus habet,

which wicked men adore and worship as deities; in which regard Lapidè opposeth them to the three persons in the blessed Trinity: † the lust of the eyes to the Father, who is liberal in communicating his essence to the Son and the Spirit; the lust of the flesh to the Son, whose generation is spiritual and eternal; the pride of life to the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of humility. That golden calf, which, being made, was set up and worshipped by the Israelites in the wilderness, is not unfitly made use of to represent these: the calf, which is a wanton creature, an emblem of the lust of the flesh; the gold of the calf, referring to the lust of the eyes; and the exalting it, to the pride of life. Oh, how do the most of men fall down before this golden calf which the world erecteth.

If you please, you may conceive the world as making a feast to entertain her lovers; and here are the three courses which she provideth for them: the first for food, the lust of the flesh; the second for sight, the lust of the eyes; the third for state, the pride of life; or as entertaining them with a musical concert, which is made up of three parts: the bass, the lust of the flesh; the tenor, the lust of the eyes; and the treble, the pride of life.

\* Gerard de consummat. sæcul.

† Aug. de verâ relig. cap. xxxv.

‡ Bern. Sa pasch Sermon. i.

§ Ghisler. *ibid.*

\* Al. Al. Ps. 4ta.

† Lap. in loc.



Once more, you may very well call these three lusts the elements of the sensual world, the lust of the flesh being as the fire in regard of its burning violence; the lust of the eyes as the earth, because about things which the earth affords; and the pride of life as the air or wind, which puffs or swells men up.

Not to enlarge further, the world is here represented to us as an hydra with three heads, or like Cerberus, that three-headed dog, which the poets feign to be the porter of hell. Worldly love is here set forth as a tree spreading itself into three main boughs, whence sprout forth the bitter fruit of all sins; or as a mother bringing forth three monstrous daughters, with which most of the sons of men fall in love with.

At this time I shall only give you a view of,

1. The eldest daughter, which is the lust of the flesh; for the better understanding whereof I shall discourse of it first in general, then in particular.

1. In general, be pleased to take notice,

(1.) That this word *flesh* is used several ways in Scripture, as Cassian hath observed. I shall not mention all its exceptions, only know that it is taken *in sensu optimo, pessimo, medio*;\* in a good sense, for a tender frame and soft disposition of the soul, whereby it is capable of receiving the impression of grace, and ready to yield obedience to God's commands. In this notion it is the matter of the promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 'I will give you an heart of flesh.'

In a very bad sense, for the native and inbred corruption which overspreads soul and body, whereby we become averse to all good and prone to whatsoever is evil; and of this St Paul speaketh when he saith, Rom. vii. 23, 'In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good.'

In a middle sense, for the inferior part of man, his body, which chiefly consists of flesh and blood; and thus we read, 2 Cor. vii. 1, of 'cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,' that is, of body and soul, and in this sense Calvin not unfitly here taketh it.

(2.) That the lust of the flesh is used in Scripture two ways, sometimes very largely, as comprehending in it all vicious lusts whatsoever, in which notion flesh is to be understood of original corruption, and is as the fountain of lust; and, inasmuch as there is no evil to which our natural pravity doth not incline us, the lust of the flesh in this sense is as it were the *genus*, whereof the several evil desires which arise in our hearts are the *species*; and in this notion is that of St Paul, Gal. v. 8, to be construed, 'Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.' And indeed for the most part, where we read of the lust of the flesh, it is to be construed in this large acceptance.

But in this place, *flesh* being put for the body, and the *lust of the flesh* being a contradistinct member to the other two, it is doubtless to be restrained, and (as

\* Cass. collat. iv. c. x.

Estius well observeth\*) signifieth *desiderium eorum quæ pertinent ad carnem*, a desire of those things which belong to the flesh; so that *flesh* here is rather to be construed *objective* than *effective*, not as the principle from whence this lust flows, but the object whereabout it is conversant; and thus all sinful desires after bodily pleasures, especially those which the two senses of tasting and touching are taken up with, are they which our apostle designeth to comprise under this head, the lust of the flesh.

(3.) That there is a double lusting after the flesh, and those things which are grateful to it, namely, natural and sensual. There is an appetite which ariseth merely from nature's indigence,† and this, though vehement (as in hunger and thirst), is not sinful. Nature teacheth every living creature earnestly to desire the conservation of the *individuum* by nourishment, and of the *species* by propagation, and therefore this kind of desire had been in man, even in the state of innocency. But then there is an appetite which sensual indulgence exciteth; and this being always immoderate beyond its due bounds, is prohibited. Indeed, neither religion nor reason do abridge us of all bodily pleasure, but they forbid us to serve pleasure so as (according to Seneca's‡ phrase) to be perplexed in the absence, or strangled with the abundance of it. In one word, the desires which proceed from the want, the delight which tends only to refresh the flesh, is allowable, but all desires and delights which proceed from and savour of wantonness are culpable, and comprised under this head, the lusts of the flesh.§

2. More particularly it will be needful, for the further discussing of this useful truth, to set before you the several kinds of this fleshly lust; for though she be a daughter, yet withal she is a mother of many brats. And it is such an arm of this tree of worldly love, as hath many branches sprouting forth of it, such as are incontinency, intemperancy, and idleness.

(1.) The first and worst of these lusts is incontinency; that which is called by St Paul, 1 Thes. iv. 5, 'the lust of concupiscence,' and by St Peter, 2 Peter ii. 10, 18, 'the lust of uncleanness;' yea, the same apostle, speaking of false teachers, that they 'allure through the lust of the flesh,' and presently adding, 'through much wantonness,' plainly intimates wantonness to be a lust of the flesh; and inasmuch as he useth the plural number, he insinuates that there are several wanton and unclean lusts of the flesh.

For method's sake, be pleased to know, that this lust of the flesh, is conversant either about a wrong or a right object.

[1.] The chief excursion of this carnal lust is after

\* Est. in loc.

† Cum natura possit supplementa que desunt, non vocatur libido sed fames aut sitis, &c — Vide Aug. Contr. Julian. lib. iv. cap. xiv.

‡ Sen. l. de Vita Beatâ, c. xv.

§ Ambros. de Ofic. lib. ii. cap. xxi.

wrong objects, concerning all which I shall in general premise,

That not only that wicked disposition of mind, which by St Paul is called *πάθος*, whereby men burn with impetuous desires after libidinous acts, resolving to lay hold of every opportunity of satisfying their lusts; nor yet only all those contemplative delights, whereby men please themselves with inward fancies and imaginations of that wickedness, which either for fear or shame they dare not outwardly commit, but also all kinds of desire, though not plenary consented to by the will, nor fully resolved upon for the performance; yea, all those first motions which arise from the vitiated appetite, though not at all consented to, are within the compass of that which is called by St Paul, *ἐπιθυμία κακή*, 'inordinate affection,' and here by St John, *ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκός*, 'the lust of the flesh.'

In particular, the object of this desire is irregular two ways.

1. When the object is such as doth *privare ordinem naturæ*, transgress the order of nature,\* and this either

Simply and absolutely, and is most properly called unnatural uncleanness, whether it be with ourselves, the sin of Onan, that secret pollution, which, (though hid from man), is open to God's eye; or with the same sex, men or women, 'dishonouring their bodies between themselves' (the sin of Sodom, Gen. xviii. 9, and those Gentiles concerning whom St Paul writeth), both which are unnatural, because contrary to nature's end, to wit, generation; or which is yet more unnatural, because it tends only to a monstrous generation, that which is between rational and merely sensitive creatures, the bestial sin of buggery, things that are as *horrenda facta*, so *pudenda dicta*, abominable to be done, yea, shameful to be named.

Or as limited and restrained after the multiplication of human nature. Of this sort are all incestuous lusts after those near relations, whether by affinity or consanguinity, such as are between brethren and sisters, uncles and nieces, aunts and nephews, parents and children or grandchildren, whether natural or civil, all which are manifestly forbidden by the divine law, and repugnant to nature's dictates. Nor are they the less filthy, but rather the more odious, when they are covered with the veil of matrimony; to which purpose St Ambrose, † dissuading the marriage of a brother with his sister's daughter, though by another mother, thus reasoneth: *Interdictum est naturæ jure, interdictum est lege quæ est in cordibus singulorum, interdictum est immutabili præscriptione pietatis et necessitudinis*, it is forbidden by nature's law, by the law within every man's heart, by the inviolable prescription of piety, and that regard which is due to propinquity. Nor will either the necessary examples of the first men, when brothers and sisters were enforced to marry for the propagation

of mankind, or the example of the Jews, in brothers marrying their brother's wife, to raise up seed by virtue of a special law, or those heroical examples (as Luther calleth them) of any of the patriarchs in any of these kinds\* (which, being dissonant from the law, are not to be imitated by others), be found sufficient warrants or excuses for them who shall give way to any incestuous conjunctions.

2. When the object is such as doth *privare ordinem virtutis*, transgress the order of the virtue of chastity. Such are all lusts after any person whom we may not justly call our own. And thus,

1. If it be after any more than one, though in a matrimonial way, which is polygamy, it is unlawful, as being against the primitive institution by God, of one woman for one man (which the prophet Malachi saith, chap. ii. 15, was because he 'sought a godly seed'), and therefore not justifiable in the patriarchs, much less excusable in us by their pattern.

2. If it be without matrimony, any lust after any persons, whether one or more, married or unmarried, is a lust of the flesh. And in the pursuit of any one of these,

1. When the one party is altogether dissenting, it is a rape, wherein only the agent is the guilty sinner, and the patient is an innocent sufferer.

2. When either both or one of the parties is married, it is adultery in that party. A lust so much the more vile, because it is a wilful shipwreck abroad, when there is an harbour and safe remedy provided at home.

3. When one of the persons is single, it is in that person fornication, and when both, it is that which is called simple fornication.

Indeed, it is questioned by some whether this latter be a lust of the flesh or no; and the most plausible argument which they allege is, that in the decree of that apostolical council, Acts xv. 20, fornication is reckoned with 'things strangled and blood,' which are in themselves of an indifferent nature. But how invalid this consequence is will easily appear, if we consider that, as Aquinas hath well observed, † the reason of joining these together is not as if there were no more moral guilt in fornication than the rest, but because the rest would be offensive to the Jews as well as fornication, and so equally cause a rent in the Christian church, which consisted of converted Jews and Gentiles. The truth is, though both persons are single, it is a breach of chastity, and consequently a lust of the flesh; nay, yet more, though the persons are not only resolved upon marriage, but contracted each to other, yet the desire of carnal copulation is a fleshly lust; for contract is but *jus ad rem*, it is matrimony giveth *jus in re*, contract binds to marriage, but alloweth not to touch before. Contract is like articles agreed upon, but marriage puts to the seal; so that it is as the taking of possession of a

\* Al. Al. pt. 2a. 9, 14, membr. 4.

† Ambros. lib. viii. ep. 66.

\* Luth. in Gen. c. xxix.

† Aquin. 2a. 2æ. ix. 154, art. 3.



man's own without due course of law, and therefore unwarrantable.

[2.] You have seen the principal outgoings of this lust, but withal you must know that the object may be right, and our desire in this kind a lust of the flesh, when it is (though between persons lawfully married) either intemperate or intemperate, in a season prohibited, in a measure not moderated, or a manner not ordained, or for an end not warranted. Upon this account it is that St Jerome saith,\* quoting the speech of a Pythagorean philosopher, *Adulter est in suam uxorem amator ardentior*; an excessive lover of, is an adulterer with, his wife; and St Austin quoteth † it as a saying of St Ambrose, *Uxor is adulterum esse qui, in usu conjugali, verecundie, temperantie et honestatis nullam rationem habeat*, that he is an adulterer who useth the marriage delights without regard to modesty, decency, and temperance. I confess these are harsh expressions, since a man can no more be an adulterer with his own wife than a thief with his own goods; and adultery, according to the notion of the Latin word, is, *ad alterius thorum accessus*, the coming to another's, not his own, bed. But yet it is thus far true, that it is a breach of the seventh commandment, which is expressed by that phrase, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery;' for though *conjugium purum*, marriage be an undefiled estate, yet *conjuges impuri*, the married persons may be unclean, and so guilty of the lust of the flesh.

(2.) The second sort of fleshly lust is intemperance, which is the excess of the appetite in reference to meat and drink; and is called by St Paul, Rom. xiii. 13, 'gluttony and drunkenness.' Very fitly is this annexed to the former, since the satiating of intemperate, is the exciting of incontinent, lusts. According to that of the Israelites, 'They did eat and drink, and rose up to play.' *Irrigata corporis nostri terra spumis libidinum geminabit*, ‡ the soil of our body being too much watered, sends forth the weeds of luxury; *Venter bene pastus cito despumat in libidinem*, § the full-fed belly boileth over with the fume of uncleanness. Isidore Pelusiota being asked by Thalassius the monk, why St Paul, Heb. xii. 15, seemeth to call Esau fornicator, when no such thing is mentioned in the Old Testament, answereth that he is branded for a glutton; and thence we may easily infer he was a fornicator. Indeed, fasting spittle is the best cure of this itch, according to that known saying, *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus*, if you will know where lady Venus liveth, it is at the sign of the ivy bush. *Gula vestibulum luxuriae*, intemperance is her gallery through which she walketh to her bed of sensual pleasure.

And now, as the former respecteth the pleasure of the touch, so this of the taste; and because the inordination of this lust is in most things of the same

nature, both in regard of eating and drinking, I shall handle these two sins of gluttony and drunkenness together.

Among all these secular things none are more necessary for man's preservation than meat and drink, since without them we are not able to subsist a few days; hence it is that nothing is more natural\* than a desire of those comforts, nature inclining everything to desire its own preservation.

But the truth is, we are very prone to unlawful desires about lawful objects; nor do we more frequently or heinously offend than in these things which are so needful for the body. Not that the food, but our appetite is in fault; not the natural appetite, for a little satisfieth that, but our sensual desire, which is very prone to exceed.

St Gregory, † enumerating several ways whereby the lust of intemperance puts itself forth, enlargeth them to five; Isidore Hispalensis‡ reduceth them to four. I conceive we may very rationally contract them into three heads, namely, the quality and quantity of that which is eaten and drunk, and the time of eating and drinking.

Our desire after meats and drinks is, then, a fleshly lust,

1. In respect of quality, when, not contented with common wholesome food, we long for strange delicacies, and must be fed with dainties. Thus the Israelites are fed with heavenly bread by a miraculous providence, and yet they fall a-lusting after quails, which God gave them, but in wrath. Indeed, it sometimes so falleth out that the choice of meat and drink ariseth from the weakness of the stomach, as in sickly persons; that the earnest desire of strange food is that which nature prompts to, as in women with child; that the use of various and costly both meats and drinks is convenient for that state and place wherein God hath set men, as at the table of kings, nobles, and great ones, all which are allowable; but when it is merely the wantonness of our appetite which calleth for delicacies, spreading its net (as Clemens Alexandrinus§ his phrase is) over the whole world, causing sea and land to be ransacked for its provision, yea, engaging art continually to invent new drinks, new dishes for its delight, this is justly to be condemned as a lust of the flesh. And which is yet a further degree of this lust, when it is after a frequent use of such meats and drinks as serve to be incentives of sin, provocations of uncleanness, especially in young men, whose blood is boiling; and most especially, when it is for that very end that thereby they may be the more fit for wanton sports, it is very abominable.

2. In regard to the quantity. When our lust is not satisfied with a competent measure of meats and drinks, but puts us upon feeding to fulness, and drinking to

\* Hier. l. i. contra Jovinian.

† Aug. lib. ii. contra Julian.

‡ Aug. Serm. lvi. de Temp.

§ Hier. in Ezek. xvi.

\* Isid. pelus. lib. i. ep. 320.

† Gr. M. sup. Gen. xxv.

‡ Isid. Hispal. de conflictu. virt. et vit.

§ Cl. Al. paedag. lib. ii. cap. i.

excess, so as we may be said rather to swallow than drink, devour than eat. Indeed, there is an extreme desire after meat which is called by physicians the dog-like appetite, and after drink, which is called the dropsy; and these arise *a malis humoribus*, from bad humours in the body, and are diseases, not sins, unless when (as too often) they proceed originally *à malis moribus*, from intemperate manners. And when not the distemper of the body, but the disorder of the mind, engageth men to an immoderate use of these creatures, it is a fleshly lust.

For the understanding whereof it will be needful to inquire, wherein the inordinate use of meats and drinks do consist. In answer whereunto you must know in general that the proportion which temperance requireth is not *rei* but *personæ*, in respect of the things, but the persons, since, according to the constitution of men's bodies, that which is too much for one may be too little for another. But more particularly, eating and drinking is excessive in any; whenas,

1. It oppresseth nature. To eat and drink more than the stomach can well digest, and that not through any accidental distemper of the stomach, or venomous quality or antipathy in the food, but only the great quantity, so as either it is thrown up again, or with a great deal of trouble concocted, is undoubtedly excessive, since whereas the proper end of eating and drinking is to repair, this tends to the impairing of nature.

2. It disturbeth reason. To eat, or rather to drink (for this more especially concerneth drunkenness) so much as wholly divesteth us of the use of reason, as in men that are dead drunk, or subjecteth reason to any passion either of anger and rage, or mirth and jollity, or lust and venery, as in men that are mad drunk, is unquestionably excessive. The worst degree of drunkenness is to intoxicate, and the next to that to inflame; since whereas the principal end of eating and drinking is to render us the more fit for God's service, by this means we are more unfit both for the duties of the general and particular calling.

Nor must I here forget to add, that they who are 'mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink,' though they do not manifestly either overcharge their stomachs or overturn their brains, are in God's account drunkards, and have therefore a woe denounced against them; but yet this is only true where either it is an acquired strength by frequent comutations, or being natural it is made use of customarily to the devouring of great quantities, and, which is worst of all, to the triumphing over weak brains.

In sum, *sicut ager ad medicinam, sic ad sumendas dapes debet unusquisque accedere, non in illis voluptatem appetens, sed necessitati succurrens*, is the rule of the father.\* Every one must look upon his food as his physie, seeking in meat and drink, not what may please the appetite, but supply necessity. After the example

\* August.

of that temperate person mentioned by Socrates,\* let us use our meat and drink, *ὡς ἔσθ' ἄλλ' ὡς παρ' ἔσθ' ἄλλ'*, not as a set business, but only a trivial matter not worth the expending much time upon. Nor yet would I hereby forbid all use of these comforts beyond what nature requireth for its necessary sustenance, as being a rigidity which neither religion nor reason exact. It is very probable at that marriage feast where Christ was present, John ii. 1, as variety was provided, so they did eat plentifully; and it is more probable that they had well drunk before Christ miraculated wine in the vessels; nor is it to be imagined that Christ would have wrought that miracle (though it were for the glory of his power) had it been unlawful for the guests to drink it, when as yet necessity of nature did not, could not, require it. To eat and to drink, therefore, at some particularly festival times, not only for the support but refreshing of nature, for necessity, but hilarity, is allowable; yet with a great deal of circumspection, especially in drinking, lest hilarity exceed the bounds of sobriety, and become a slippery step to ebriety; and when our desire after these creatures carrieth further than moderate refreshment, so as either for the meat's and drink's or company's sake to indulge the over free use of them, it is a sensual, sinful lust of the flesh.

3. In respect of the time; and it is a lust of the flesh, when our desire after meats and drinks is such as that, 1, we will at no time forbear the total use of them (though yet the strength of nature will bear it), no, not for religious ends; 2, we indulge to ourselves a liberal use of them, at such time when the church's distress calls for fasting, weeping, and mourning; 3, finally, we expend too great a part of our time on them (with the rich glutton), Luke xvi. 19, 'faring deliciously every day,' feasting too often with those princes, Eccles. x. 6, 'eating in the morning,' beginning too soon, and with those Israelites, Isa. v. 18, 'rising up early that we may follow strong drink, and continuing till midnight,' staying too long. It is very observable, that not only *ὄνοφλυγίαι*, 'excess of wine,' but *κώμοι*, and *πίτοι*, 'banquetings and drinkings,' are reckoned among the lusts in which the Gentiles walked, 1 Pet. iv. 3, though we do not eat till we are so pury that we cannot go, or drink till we are so giddy that we cannot stand; yet if we delight so much in, and have such a desire after, that it causeth us to spend too much time in comutations and comutations, it is a lust of the flesh. Solomon blameth them who 'tarry long at the wine,' Prov. xxiii. 30, when men dine all day, and sup all night; eat and drink away a third part, nay, the better half of the time. These men, according to the vulgar translation of the wise man's fore-mentioned expression, *Student calicibus epotandis*, make their cups their books and drink their business, meditate nothing but their trenchers, and lock up their souls in the kitchen and the cellars: ac-

\* Socrat. Hist. lib. iv. cap. xviii.



cording to St Gregory Nyssen's phrase,\* they have *λαϊμὸν ἀντὶ λογιζομένου*, their reason in their throat; or, to use Tertullian's phrase,† *Agape in cacabis ferret, fides in culinis calet, spes in ferculis jacet*; their love boileth in their cauldrons, their faith is warm in their kitchens, and their hope lieth in their dishes. Like the serpent (to allude with St Ambrose‡), they creep upon their bellies, yea, with that fish whereof Clemens Alexandrinus speaketh, they have their heart in their belly; as if, like Bonosus, they were born not to live, but to drink; or, like the Megarenses, they did not eat to live, but live to eat.

(3.) Besides these, which are the principal branches of this arm, ebullitions of this lust of the flesh, there is yet a third, which must not be passed over in silence; and that is, idleness, a lust which renders men liable to temptations of the former kind. Incontinence and intemperance are no strangers to an idle bosom. The poet gives this as the reason why Ægistus was an adulterer,

In promptu causa est; desidiosus erat,

because he was slothful. Standing water putrefieth, so doth the lazy person; he that loves to do nothing will soon do worse than nothing.

Now this lust of idleness expresseth itself two ways: by an inordinate desire of sleep, of play. Of each a word.

[1.] It is a true saying of St Austin, § God hath given to man sleep, *Quo reparentur membra corporis ut possint vigilantem animam sustinere*, by which the strength both of body and mind may be repaired. Indeed, sleep loveth man's nature, cheering, refreshing, corroborating it, but yet man must not love sleep too affectionately, Prov. xx. 13. It is the cry of the sluggard in the Proverbs, 'Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep,' which the Syriac readeth, *ponit manuum super pectus*, he puts his hand upon his breast, shewing how dear and pleasing his sleep is unto him.

If more particularly you would know what love of sleep is immoderate, I answer,

1. When we are so greedy of, that we will not sometimes interrupt it for acts of devotion, after the example of David, who rose at midnight to give thanks to God, and of Christ, who sometimes prayed all night; nay, we suffer sleep to interrupt us whilst exercised about religious duties, like Eutychus, upon whom an heavy sleep fell whilst Paul was preaching, and an heavy hand of God whilst he was sleeping: a sad warning for all church-sleepers, to all whom methinketh Christ saith, as he did to Peter, 'Could you not watch with me one hour?'

2. When we give such way to sleep on our couch

by day, or our bed by night, that it is rather *sepultura suffocati*, than *requies lassii*, a suffocating than a refreshing of the spirit, a dulling than a quickening of the body. It is St Ambrose his assertion of the blessed Virgin Mary, *Non prius dormire cupiditas quam necessitas fuit*, she was rather enforced than willing to sleep. Indeed, vigilancy teacheth not to sleep sooner nor longer than need requireth; and it is Chrysologus\* his advice, *Indulgendum somno ut corpus repararet, non resolvat; ut vires revocet, non enervet*, sleep must be indulged to so far as may repair nature, and recall, not weaken, strength, or else it is a lust of the flesh.

[2.] As to sports and pleasures, it is not to be gainsaid but that there is a convenient use of them. *ἀδυνατον μὲν οὐνεχῶς πονεῖν*, saith Aristotle truly,† it is impossible that the bow should be always bent; and therefore Pindar fitly calls play, *ἀριστον τόνων ἰατρὸν*, the best curer of our labours; but yet excessively to love it is a lust of the flesh; in which respect saith the Greek father excellently,‡ *οὐ κολύω τὴν ἀνεσιν ἀλλὰ κολύω τὴν ἀμετρίαν*, I do not forbid relaxation, but I condemn want of moderation. Now our lust after sport is inordinate,

1. For the matter or object of it, whenas we love to sport with things unlawful, which are impious, or cruel, or dishonest, or of bad report among judicious and sober Christians. *Ludus noxius in culpa*, they are fools (saith the wise man, and justly) who make sport of sin, and they are unwise who prefer their sport before their credit.

2. For the manner, whenas men pursue their play with too much earnestness and unrestrained enlargement, as if it were to be *τέλος*, the end of their desire. It is a good advice of St Ambrose, § *Caveamus ne dum relaxare animum volumus, solvamus omnem harmoniam*, we had need take care lest by letting the strings down too loose we spoil the harmony; we may take recreation as sauce, but not be as greedy of it as if it were our meat. It is excellent to make our business a play, but infamous to make play our business.

3. For the time, when men are so eager, that, according to Seneca's phrase, *agitur vita per ludum*, they play away their lives, squandering days and nights, months and years, in play; and take so much time, that they rob God of his due, neglect their calling, play when they should pray, and sport when they should work. Cicero saith divinely,|| we must not indulge to our sports, *priusquam gravibus seriisque rebus satisfecerimus*, till we have discharged more serious and weighty affairs. In which respect Aristotle adviseth, *καίρω φιλάττειν*, to make choice of fit opportunities for recreation.

And thus, with what perspicuous brevity these various and serious subjects would afford, I have un-

\* Greg. Nyssen. in Eccl. Hom. v.

† Tertull. adv. Psychi. c. ult.

‡ Ambros. l. de parad. cap. xv.

§ Aug. in Ps. lxxii.

\* Chrysol. Serm. xxiv.

† Arist. Eth. lib. x. cap. vi. Pind.

‡ Gr. Nazian. orat. 6.

§ Ambros. Offic.

|| Cic. Offic.

folded the latitude of this evil, which is here called the lust of the flesh.

To wind up this discourse in few words.

How great a predominancy this lust of the flesh hath in the world, the gluttonies, drunkenness, and unclean practices of the most do sadly proclaim. Seneca complained that the men of his time were *inter vinum et oleum occupati*, altogether taken up with wine and oil. I would to God such were only to be found among pagans, but, alas! these swarm in the Christian world, nay, which is yet more sad, in the reformed protestant church of England. Oh that papists and sectaries had not too just cause to say, A great part of the English protestants are unclean, adulterous, gluttonous epicures, quaffing drunkards, riotous gamblers, so that whilst they profess the purest faith they lead the most debauched lives. For these bastard sons doth their mother the church mourn, and suffer at this day; and yet, as if all her sufferings were not worth their pity, they still renew and multiply these sins, to the dishonour of her profession, and the prolongation of her miseries.

Indeed, according to that known proverb, *venter non habet aures*, the belly hath not ears; voluptuous persons are deaf to divine instructions; and as St Jerome, truly speaking of these sins, *eo deponere est difficilium quò eis uti est dulcius*, they are therefore very difficult to leave, because so sweet to enjoy; so that as Solomon observeth of the adulterer in particular, Prov. ii. 19, it is too true of all those sorts of sinners, they are hardly, and therefore rarely, reclaimed; but yet I will not wholly despair even of their conversion. However, for others' prevention I shall propose these following considerations: the lust of the flesh is defiling, destroying, and consequently not only to be abandoned, but abhorred.

1. It is defiling. True it is, as our Saviour saith, 'that which goeth in at the mouth' (the object of these lusts) 'doth not defile a man,' but it is as true, that which 'cometh from the heart' (the lust after these objects) 'doth defile.' Indeed, all sin is of a polluting nature, but especially these; and therefore one of these lusts in a peculiar manner is called impurity and uncleanness. The gross acts of these sins defile the body, and the very lust after them defileth the soul.

2. It is debasing. Indeed, nothing is more natural than a desire after these objects, but yet nothing is more unnatural than the inordinate lust after them; and what a shame is it that the grace of God should not teach us to deny these lusts, which the light of nature teacheth heathens. It is observed that of all living creatures, man hath the narrowest womb, and the straitest throat, as if nature would thereby teach us to be the most abstemious. The truth is, the lust of the flesh is not only unchristian, because contrary to the precept and practice of our Lord and Master, but inhuman, because opposite to the dic-

tates of reason; so that we may truly affirm, men, by the fulfilling of this lust, become like the beast that perisheth, whilst gluttony transformeth them into tigers, drunkenness into swine, uncleanness into goats, sloth into dormouses, and laziness into asses; nay, shall I add, they are worse than the beasts, for whercas these creatures cannot be made to eat or drink more than their natural appetite requireth, and observe their usual times of conjunction, voluptuous men regard neither season nor measure in the satiating of their lusts. Add to all this,

3. It is destroying. And here I might enlarge in several respects, this lust of the flesh being that which destroyeth the credit, the state, the body, yea (without sincere repentance), the soul of him that indulgeth to it. Solomon saith of the adulterer, Prov. vi. 33, and it is as true of the glutton and drunkard, 'A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.' Sensual lusts, whilst they please the flesh, blot the name, and though the execution of them content the sinner's taste and touch, they make him to stink in the nostrils of God and man. Again, the wise man, warning the young man not to lust after the whorish woman in his heart, saith ver. 25, 26, that 'by means of an whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread;' and elsewhere, chap. xxiii. 21, in one verse he tells us, that 'the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall cloth a man with rags.' The full cup makes an empty purse, and the fat dish a lean bag, a soft bed a thin shop, and the costly mistress a threadbare servant. Yet again, Solomon saith of the adulteress, she 'hunts for the precious life;' it is no less true of banqueting, drinkings, revellings, and such like. It is not seldom seen that men, by satisfying these carnal lusts, endanger their lives, ruin their healths, and hasten their ends. Finally, the wise man saith of the unclean sinner, that he 'destroyeth his own soul,' and it is verified of the rest. The glutton's table is a snare as well to his soul as his body; the drunkard's cup spoileth him of grace as well as wit; the gamester staketh his soul as well as his state; and the sluggard, by consulting his body's temporal ease, hazardeth his soul's eternal rest.

And now, my brethren, if upon all these accounts you are at last willing to bid farewell to this lust of the flesh, remember what is hinted in the beginning of this discourse, namely, that it is a fire, and therefore you will do well to take the same course in subduing this lust which men do in putting out a fire.

More particularly, take notice of these four directions:

1. Extinguish it whilst but a spark, lest when a flame it become too powerful. Resist the very beginning, since if you give the least way to, you will be entangled by, it. *Verecunda peccati initia*, sensual desires at first are modest, but if consented to, and delighted in, are more and more craving, yea, at last



commanding. Indeed, *sensim sine sensu*, by little and little insensibly this lust gets ground of us, therefore let us be watchful betimes to espy and prevent it.

2. Subtract the fuel which feeds and increaseth it. St Peter's counsel is, 1 Peter ii. 10, 'Abstain from fleshly lusts,' which is best done by taking away that which fomenteth them. What St Paul saith of the legal ceremonies, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' that I may fitly apply to sensual lusts. Take heed of the occasions inducing to them; *eradenda sunt prave cupidinis alimenta*, if you would not have lust to fatten, do not feed it. Not to launch out into those many particulars which might be reckoned up in this kind, beware especially of evil company. It is Solomon's advice, Prov. xxiii. 20, 'Be not amongst wine-bibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh.' The way not to be of them, is not to be one among them. Men seldom imagine, till they find it by woful experience, what an infectious breath there is in evil society, to corrupt their minds and manners.

3. Pour out water, even the water of penitent tears, for thy former impurities. 'The heads of dragons

are broken in the waters;' *draconum capita vitia capitalia*, the heads of dragons are capital sins, among which incontinency and intemperance are the chief. And look, as the greater the flame, the more water must be poured on, it is not drops, but buckets, nay, floods of water must quench the raging furnace. So, according to the greatness of thy sins, proportion the multitude of thy tears; and if thou hast been a notorious offender in this kind, thou must be a dolorous mourner.

4. Lastly, strive to blow out this fire of lust by the breath of thy prayers; sollicit the throne of grace for chastity, sobriety, vigilancy, temperance, those virtues which are directly opposite to this lust; yea, beseech the Spirit of God that he would breathe into thy soul, and thereby extinguish the flame of thy lust. Indeed, the breath of the evil spirit maketh this fire the hotter, but a blast of the good Spirit will put it out, at least much slack it; and therefore, laying hold on the gracious promise of giving his Spirit to them that ask, give not over praying till thou hast obtained the Spirit of grace, whereby thou mayest mortify this lust of the flesh. Amen.

## SERMON XLI.

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.—1 JOHN II. 15, 16.*

THAT god of this world, prince of darkness, and arch-enemy of mankind, the devil, as he wants not virulency, so he is full of subtilty. Indeed, it is his most usual practice to take sinners in the snares of temptations, nets of circumvention, and ambushes of destruction. No wonder if St Paul minds the Corinthians of his *νόματα* as well as *ὄργανα*, devices as well as strongholds.

Among all his cunning stratagems, none more politic and prevalent than those by which he taketh advantage from ourselves against ourselves. To this purpose it is that he observeth the age of our lives, quality of our outward condition, the complexion and constitution of our bodies, the abilities and endowments of our minds, dispositions and inclinations of our hearts, and accordingly fits his temptations, whereby too often he overcometh us. The last of these, and not the least, St Basil taketh notice of where he saith,\* *τὰς ἡμετέρας ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ἡμῶν βέλγη ποιούμενος ὑπαρχει*, he useth our own lusts and desires as weapons to fight against us. And no wonder if the wind of his temptations blow us on amain, when it joineth with the tide of our own desires. Good reason had St John, having encouraged young men, and in them all Christians, to battle with, and a victory over the wicked one, to warn them of those lusts which, if

not mortified, would be prejudicial unto them, and serviceable unto him: 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.'

We are now in order to proceed to a second daughter of worldly love, namely, 'the lust of the eyes;' but what St John meaneth by this expression, admits among expositors of several constructions.

Illyricus conceiveth\* that our apostle intendeth *potissimum libidinosos aspectus*, chiefly lustful looks, nuclean aspects, wanton glances. This was that with which St Peter charged the false teachers, 2 Peter ii. 14, that they had 'eyes full of adultery;' and of which our Saviour affirmeth, Mat. v. 28, that to 'look on a woman, so as to lust after her, is a committing adultery with her in the heart.' But since this more properly is referred to the fore-mentioned lust of the flesh, and withal it is too narrow a restriction of the apostle's meaning, I shall pass it by.

There are two interpretations, the one whereof is St Aust'n's and Venerable Bede's,† the other most generally received by ancient and modern authors, both of which being probable, I shall reject neither.

Indeed, I think we shall do best, with Aquinas,‡ to

\* Illyr in loc.

† Beda in loc. Aug. in loc. et lib. x Confess. et de Relig. cap. xxxv.

‡ Aquin. 2a. 2æ. 9, 153.

\* Bas. M. hom. xxiii.

look upon them as two members of one exposition. And so, if you would know what this lust of the eyes is, the answer is, *curiositas* and *cupiditas*—a desire of knowing and of having—curiosity and covetousness, the latter of which I shall insist upon, because it is that which I incline to as most genuine.

1. By this lust of the eyes, we may very well understand curiosity, or an inordinate desire of knowledge; and whereas there is a double knowledge, to wit, intellectual and sensitive, both which may be inordinately desired, this lust of the eyes may very well include both, inasmuch as the mind hath its eyes as well as the body; and so this lust is both of the mental eyes after intellectual, and of the corporeal after sensitive knowledge.

(1.) There is a lust of the eyes after intellectual knowledge: not but that knowledge is suitable to, and consequently desirable by, the mind of man; nor yet is every earnest desire after knowledge to be charged with curiosity; indeed, it is such as cannot be had without, and therefore must be sought for with, diligence; but if you would know when it is a lust of the eyes, I answer, the inordination of this desire is discovered several ways.

[1.] When it is a desire after knowledge for a bad end. St Bernard observed in his time,\* and it is still true, *Sunt qui scire volunt, tantum ut sciant*, some desire to know that they may know; and such a desire is irregular, because it maketh knowledge an end, whereas it is designed to be a means of a further and better end. Aquinas observeth† that there are two accidental effects of knowledge which are very evil, namely, to puff us up with pride, and make us expert in wickedness. And when those accidental effects of knowledge are the intentional ends of our desire, it is a lust of the eyes. The truth is, knowledge is desirable chiefly in order to practice, and that of good; and therefore to desire it only as fuel for our self-conceit, or which is far worse, as an help to wicked devices, that we may be wise to do evil, it is deservedly censured as exorbitant.

[2.] When it is a desire after knowledge by magical arts and diabolical helps. It is far better to be ignorant than to go to school to the devil. That knowledge we gain by him is far fetched, because from hell; and dear bought, because with the hazard of our souls.

[3.] When, by desires and endeavours after the knowledge of the things that are less needful, we are hindered from the knowledge of what is more needful; thus when men prefer human before divine, and, in divine, speculative before practical knowledge, it is justly blameable. They who are diligent searchers into nature's secrets, undervaluing the mysteries of religion; they who content themselves with the knowledge of creatures, but are not by that led to know the Creator; they who are desirous rather to break their teeth against the bones of difficulty, than feed their

souls with necessary truths; who are inquisitive after the manner of the creature's groaning, but little desirous of experiencing those groans of the Spirit in their own hearts which cannot be uttered; who are more solicitous where the soul of Lazarus was whilst his body lay in the grave, than where their own souls shall be when their bodies must dwell in the dust; when and where the last judgment shall be, than how they shall appear in that day with boldness; are most deservedly charged with curiosity. Indeed, as eagles when they rest, and lions when they walk, pull in the one his talons, the other his claws, to keep them sharp against such time as they meet with a prey; so it would be our wisdom to reserve our wits and studies for things of most weight, and not busy them in matters of less concernment.

[4.] Lastly, when we desire to know what is without our sphere, and above our reach. For illiterate mechanics to busy themselves in expounding the dark places of Scripture, in fathoming the depth of theological controversies; for the most learned doctors to be wise above what is written, to endeavour to make windows in God's closet, and unclasp his secret books, and so seek after the knowledge of what God hath concealed, it is no other than a lust of curiosity. And therefore St Austin's counsel\* is very prudent, *Compescenda est humana temeritas; id quod non est quærat, ne quod est non inveniat*, we must bridle our temerity, and check our curiosity, lest, whilst we pursue what is not revealed, we find not that which is. Take we heed of soaring too high, lest we be scorched; and wading too deep, lest we be drowned. There are some things we may *nescire sine crimine*, not know without blame, which we cannot *scire sine discrimine*, know without danger; and in respect of these, a learned ignorance is to be preferred before an ignorant learning.

(2.) There is a lust of the eyes after sensitive knowledge, and thus we may extend it to all the senses, curiosity studying to please them all in their several ways; and so the eyes being the most noble sense, the lust of the eyes may synecdochically comprehend the rest. We read concerning the sinners in Zion, Amos vi. 4-6, that they did 'lie upon beds (or bedsteads) of ivory,' by which their eyes were delighted; 'stretch themselves upon their couches,' for the pleasing of their touch; 'eat the lambs out of the flocks, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, and drink wine in bowls,' to the satiating of their taste; 'chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music,' for the ravishing of their ears; and 'anoint themselves with the chief ointment,' that their smell might have its sweet savour: so curious are sensual men in giving content to all their senses. But seeing, according to this notion, the lust of the eyes will in some sort comprehend the lust of the flesh, I conceive it will be better confined to that particular sense, and so

\* Bern. in Cant. serm. xxxvi. † Aquin. 2a. 2æ. 9, 167.

\* Aug. contra Manich. lib. vi. cap. i.



denoteth a curiosity of seeing. In reference to this notion it is that this lust of the eyes is phrased *nugacitas spectaculorum*, the vanity of seeing shows, the affection of delectable sights. This seemeth to have been the curiosity of Eve, in looking on the forbidden fruit; of Lot's wife, in looking back on flaming Sodom; and of Dinah, in going forth to see the daughters in the land, Gen. xxxiv. 1. Not that all desire of seeing rare and pleasant objects, whether of nature or art, is unlawful; but when our desire, and consequently our delight, is too passionate, even to admiration, and that joined with forgetfulness of the great artificer, when it is not carried *ad aliquid utile, imò ad aliquid noxium* (as the schools determine it), to such sights as may occasion good, yea, rather incite to evil in any kind, it is no other than a lust of the eyes. Upon which account Seneca said truly,\* Nothing proveth more prejudicial to good manners, than vain and foolish sights, by which vices steal into the mind.

As an appendix to this, is that curiosity of trying (to see, being as much sometimes as to make trial), whereby men will needlessly put themselves or others upon such experiments, as may probably prove prejudicial in any kind, which is no less than a tempting of God. To this the devil tempted our Saviour, when he bade him cast himself down from the pinnacle, which is referred by St Austin, as hath been already observed, to this head, the lust of the eyes.

2. But the other branch of the interpretation seemeth to me most probable, and therefore upon that I shall insist, which by the lust of the eyes understandeth covetousness; that is, the inordinate desire of gold, silver, goods, lands, houses, and all possessions, which denominate men rich in this world.

And now, for the better discovery of this, it will be needful to resolve two queries:

Why this lust is called the lust of the eyes?

When our desires of these things becometh the lust of the eyes?

(1.) It may not be unfitly inquired, why our apostle calleth covetousness the lust of the eyes? To which a double answer may be returned, because the eyes are both the inlets and the outlets of this lust: by the eyes as a door this lust gets into, and by the eyes as a window it looketh out of, the soul. That expression of Solomon, Eccles. ii. 10, 'Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them,' may at first sight seem strange, the heart being the seat of desire; and yet it will appear very rational, if we consider that the eye is the instrument of desire, by which it is first excited and then cherished.

[1.] This lust enters in at the eyes. It is that, indeed, which is true of other desires as well as this. The eye is the soul's burning-glass, in which the beams of visible objects, being as it were contracted, the fire of lust in several kinds is kindled in the soul; in which respect the eyes are well called by Seneca,†

*irritamenta matorum ducesque scelerum*, the ringleaders of evil and incentives to wickedness. When the wise man, Prov. xxiii. 31, forbids to 'look upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup,' he thereby intimateth, saith Cassiodorus,\* that not only *dulcedo*, but *pulchritudo*, its sweetness to the taste, but pleasantness to the eye, is apt to allure to excess, *ex visu nascitur amor*. This Job was aware of in regard of the lust of uncleanness, and therefore he saith, Job xxxi. 1, 'I made a covenant with my eyes, that I might not look upon a maid.' And yet more particularly the eyes are usual and prevalent means of stirring up covetous lusts. When Solomon, speaking of riches, puts the question, Prov. xxiii. 5, not why wilt thou set thine heart, but thine eyes? when yet he meaneth the heart, what doth he but imply that by our eyes our hearts become enamoured with them? You know the story of Achan, who, seeing the wedges of gold, and the Babylonish garments, was bewitched with, and laid hold upon them. Indeed, there is a strange attractive force both in gold and silver, being looked upon, to gain desire; for which reason perhaps it is that the Hebrews derive the noun *קנין* which signifieth silver, from the verb *קנין* which signifieth to desire.

[2.] This lust goeth out at the eyes. Covetous men very much please themselves in beholding their riches. And, indeed, this is in a sort peculiar to this lust, for though the objects of the lust of the flesh be visible and delightful to the eye, yet the other senses of taste and touch are chiefly pleased, and the lust after them rests not till those senses be pleased as well as the eye; whereas riches are so the objects of the eye, that the other senses have no carnal pleasure by them; yea, the greatest satisfaction a covetous man giveth his lust, is looking upon them. Hence it is that he so often, when alone, openeth his chest that he may look upon his white and yellow earth; like that Roman emperor who had his several hours in the day of telling over his money, and carrying it from one chest to another; or like the covetous old man in Plantus, who could never endure to have his pot of gold out of sight. For this cause it is that he loves to walk in his garden, ride through his lands, that he may take a view of his possessions. So good reason had our apostle to phrase it the lust of the eyes.

Indeed, there is an objection here started by a schoolman,† to wit, how the covetousness of a blind man can be said to be the lust of the eyes.

To which the answer is easily given, by reassuming that fore-mentioned distinction of the corporeal and intellectual eyes, since, as he well observeth, *licet color non possit pervenire ad visum, tamen cognitio hujus visi potest pervenire ad oculum mentis interioris*, though the colour of the gold and silver cannot come to his outward eye, yet the knowledge of these visible objects

\* Cassiod. lib. xii. var. 3.

† Al. Al. Ps. 2a. ix. 144.

\* Sen. Ep. 71.

† Sen. de remed. fortuit.

may come to his inward eye, and so he feeds his lust by the contemplation of his wealth.

Having cleared the passage by giving an account of the first, we may now more easily proceed to a discussion of the second and principal question, which will give further light to the reason of the appellation, and so to the resolution of the former; and if you would know when our lust after wealth is a lust of the eyes, and so irregular, be pleased to know,

That this lust must be considered in a double reference, to wit, *respectu acquirendi* and *retinendi*, in regard of getting and keeping wealth, craving and saving it. Indeed, as the grave is said to have both a mouth and an hand in Scripture, so hath this lust of the eyes a mouth to receive, and an hand to retain; and accordingly it is made up of two ingredients, rapacity and tenacity.

1. Rapacity, which is the lust of getting riches, offends either *respectu objecti* or *mensuræ*, in regard of the matter or the measure.\*

(1.) The desire of getting is the lust of the eyes, when it is conversant about either *aliena* or *superflua*, those things which duly belong to another, or those things which are superfluous and needless for ourselves.

[1.] To lust after other men's estates is undoubtedly sinful, and not improperly called a lust of the eyes, since (as Zanchy† observeth) such persons, *quicquid bonorum mundi vident, cupiunt et sibi usurpare student*, like longing women, they lust after whatsoever they see, and though it belongs to another, strive to make it their own. Thus Ahab seeth Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 1, and presently is sick for it; nor can anything cure his distemper but Naboth's dispossession. This is that which is expressly forbidden in the last commandment, and that in a most extensive phrase, Exod. xx. 17, 'Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's.'

Indeed, there are some things of this world that are common, as the air and water, wherein all men partake without prejudice one to another; but there are some things proper, as lands, moneys, goods, in which every legal possessor hath a peculiar interest, and to which he hath a just right; and when we look upon others' enjoyments, not only with an evil, that is, an envious eye, repining that they are theirs, but with an evil, that is, a covetous eye, wishing they were ours, that is a lust of the eyes. The rabbins have an excellent saying to this purpose: † He that saith, Mine is thine, and thine is mine, is an idiot; he that saith, Mine is mine, and thine is thine, is moderate; he that saith, Mine is thine, and thine is thine, is charitable; but he that saith, Thine is mine, and mine is mine, is wicked; ay, though it be only saying it in his heart, to wish it were so. Not, beloved, that all desire of what is at present another's is a covetous lust, but whenas I desire that from another which is

as expedient for him as it can be for me, or which he taketh delight in, and so is unwilling to part with, or which, if it were my own case, I should be loath to forego to him, or any other that should desire it of me in the like kind, it becometh a sinful desire of the eyes.

[2.] Not only to lust after what is another's, but after what is superfluous, is the lust of the eyes, and fitly so called, inasmuch as what is more than for our just use is only for our eyes. Covetousness is not simply a desire of having more, and therefore more must be added to its definition; it is *plus velle quam sat est*, a desire of having more than is enough, not for our desire, but conveniency. Observable to this purpose is that prayer of Agur, Prov. xxx. 8, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me:' where the right object of a lawful desire is food convenient; and consequently a desire of riches, that is, a greater measure of wealth than is convenient, is sinful. If God's providence cast superabundant riches upon us in the exercise of our callings, we are gratefully to accept them, but we may not desire and seek after them; suitable to which is that gloss of Estius\* upon these words of St Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 10, 'They that will be rich;' it is not they who *are* rich, but they who *will be*. *Cupiditates accusat, non facultates*, saith St Austin,† riches are gifts in wisdom's left hand; not the having, but the craving them, is blameworthy. Congruous hereunto is that of Reynolds: there are some who have them, but love them not; and others who neither have nor love them. Both these, especially the former, are to be commended. Again, there are some who have and love them, and others who want and love them, and both these are to be condemned; not the one for the having, or the other for the wanting, but both for the loving them.

The only question which is here necessary to be resolved is, What are those superfluous riches which we ought not to desire?

The answer to which will be best returned by the resolving of another question, namely, What is to be accounted necessary and convenient? the measure of which is taken from a double reference, to wit, to ourselves and others.

In regard of ourselves, there is a threefold necessity.

1. *Naturæ*. What is requisite to procure food, raiment, and habitation, without which we cannot subsist.

2. *Persona*. What is needful to provision for those who belong to us, wife, children, and servants, who are to be accounted, as it were, a part of ourselves.

3. *Status et conditionis*. What is competent to, and convenient for, the place to which God hath called us, and station wherein he hath set us?

In regard of others, there is a double necessity, to wit,

\* Aquin. 2a. 2æ. ix. 118, art. 1. † Zanch. in loc.

‡ Paulus Fagius sentent. Heb.

\* Est. ibid.

† Aug. Hom. iii.



1. *Publica*. What is needful to render us subservient to the maintenance of the magistracy and ministry of church and commonwealth.

\* 2. *Privata*. What may enable us in some measure to relieve the indigence of those poor persons amongst whom we live.

And now, to desire more than what may fit us for a convenient discharge of these several obligations, is an unlawful lust, inasmuch as it carrieth us after a wrong object.

(2.) The lust of getting is a sinful lust of the eyes, whenas it is excessive in measure, which we may well call the greedy eye, according to the derivation of *avarus* from *ave* and *aurum*; and this excess appeareth especially in three things: whenas it is,

[1.] Resolute, or rather absolute, that we *will* have these things (as it were) whether God will or no. This seemeth to be the emphasis of that fore-mentioned phrase, 'They that will be rich,' that will be so by any means; all is fish that cometh to their net, though it be a snake instead of a lamprey; they will attempt any exploits, be they never so unlawful, rather than not obtain their desire.

[2.] Hasty. Impatient of delay, that we will not wait God's pleasure, or stay his leisure. The poets feign, that when Plutus, which is riches, was sent from Jupiter, he limpeth away, goeth slowly; but when from Pluto (which we may moralise to be the devil), he runneth. No wonder if Solomon saith, Prov. xviii. 10, 'He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent; he that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye.' Indeed, evil men usually for haste leave the king's highway, and leap over hedge and ditch, take indirect courses, and oftentimes the more haste, the worst speed.

[3.] Discontented. So that, if our desires succeed not, we are froward and peevish like Jonah, or heavy and melancholy like Ahab; grieved, nay, mad, that we cannot have our will; especially when, being crossed in our designs, we shoot the arrows of our rage against heaven, and repine at God himself. And thus I have given you an account of the first branch of this lust of the eyes.

2. This sinful lust discovereth itself no less by tenacity than rapacity; to understand which aright know,

(1.) That all desire of keeping is not culpable. We may, nay, ought to be careful of provision, not only for our present but future uses. It is the ant's wisdom which Solomon would have us imitate, in summer to lay up for winter; more especially if God bless us with posterity, we are bound to endeavour the keeping in store a proportionable competency, that they may have wherewith to subsist when we are gone. For to this, no doubt, that of the apostle extends, 'He that provideth not for his family' (to wit, as he is able) 'is worse than an infidel.' If, therefore, you would know what desire of keeping is tenacity, I answer,

[1.] When we are impatient at the loss of riches. Alexander, desiring to know whether Apelles was in love with Campaspe, caused a boy to come in whilst they were discoursing, and cry out, Apelles, your shop is on fire; at the hearing of which he presently cried out, If the picture of Campaspe be burnt, I am undone, by which he knew he was in love with her. So are we with riches, if, upon the loss of them, we think ourselves undone, and are so far from learning, with Job, to bless God, as that, according to his wife's counsel, we curse him in our hearts, because he taketh these things away from us.

[2.] When we think our treasure is neverfull enough, laying up abundance, that we may leave our children a vast estate, which too often proves a lure for birds of prey, betraying them to the fawning of flatterers, embracing of harlots, society of the riotous, so that what was niggardly kept by the one is as prodigally spent by the other; and much more when, having no posterity, a man layeth up wealth only that it may be said he died rich. This is he of whom the wise man speaketh, Eccles. iv. 8, 'There is one alone, and there is not a second, yea, he hath neither child nor brother, yet is there no end of all his labour, neither is his eye satisfied with riches, neither saith he, For whom do I labour and hereave my soul of good?'

[3.] Chiefly when we are loath to part with our estates upon fitting occasions. It is the psalmist's caution, 'If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them;' and this we do when we are not willing to expend them for good uses, and are so solicitous for the future that we lay out nothing for the present, caring for wealth as our own, earnestly, using it as another's, sparingly. Indeed, whereas the wise Grecians call riches *ζῆματα*, from *ζῆαμαι*, to use, covetous men look upon them as *κτήματα*, from *κτάομαι*, to possess.

1. Some there are who, out of great estates, will not part with anything for necessary uses; such are they who will not afford themselves conveniences,\* *Parvo vivunt, sordissimè vestiuntur*, they fare hard and go meanly, and so are in debt to back and belly; the covetous man, *corpus extenuat ut lucrum extendat*, keeps his body empty, that his purse may be full, and so, to use the Greek poet's comparison, he leads a mule's life, or, if you will, an ass's life, who, being laden with gold, feeds on hay. Little better are they who grudge to maintain their relations in such a way as is convenient both for their comfort and their own honour, denying to their wives fitting supplies, suffering their children to go in rags, feeding their servants with mouldy crusts, more fit to be thrown to dogs than set before men.

2. Others there are who will not expend their estates in just uses, who, though they have money in their chests, yet will not pay Cæsar his tribute, nor the minister his tithes, the creditor his debts, nor

\* Bellarm cont.

make restitution to those whom they have injured, till they are enforced.

3. Finally, very many there are, who, though they are willing to expend for necessary and just, yet will part with nothing, or at least nothing proportionable, for pious and charitable uses. Like the ground whence their gold and silver is digged, they are barren of good works: out of their thousands they hardly part with hundreds, no, nor scores of pounds, for the relief of their indigent brethren. Laban and Nabal are one the anagram of the other, both covetous churls, the one whereof would not part with his sheep to Jacob, though it was in point of honesty according to his own agreement; and the other would not give his bread and wine to David and his men when in great distress. And this was the avarice of the rich man in the Gospel, who, though he laid out his estate for his own delicious food, yet would not allow poor Lazarus his crumbs. These men, if they exchange their money for oil to make their own countenance cheerful, yet they will not for wine, to make glad the hearts of the afflicted.

All of these are justly to be charged with tenacity. For whereas the two chief ends of riches (as Aristotle observeth\*) are *δαπάνη και δόσις*, discharging of costs, and conferring of gifts, these do not employ them for either, at least not for both; and, indeed, as the former, so this is very fitly called the lust of the eyes, that the lust of a greedy, and this of a needy eye, which thinketh not abundance a sufficiency, and therefore, though it have much, will part with nothing; by which means it is that such men, *solos oculos pascunt*, instead of feeding their own and others' bellies, only feed their own eyes, and have no other use of all their wealth but to behold it. So that, as Asterius hath well observed,† whereas no man goeth to sea for itself, but to fetch or traffic; no man tills the ground for itself, but to reap a gainful harvest; a covetous man gets wealth for itself, not to expend but keep, do good with, but look upon; so that, according to the poet's phrase,‡

*Pictis tanquam gaudere tabellis,*

he maketh little other use of his coin than men do of their pictures, which only serve to please the eye. In reference to which we may apply that of Solomon, Eccles. v. 11, 'What good is there to the owner thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?'

And now, beloved, I could wish that my discourse of this subject were impertinent, and of no concernment to any here present; but as when our Saviour bade him that was without sin among the people cast the first stone at the woman taken in the act of adultery, they went out one by one, John viii. 7, 9, so that Christ and the woman were left alone, being, as the text tells us, 'convicted in their own consciences,' to wit, that they were all sinners; so, I doubt, were

this congregation put to the test, they would go out one by one, as forced upon due search to confess themselves guilty of this lust. The truth is, as many wear God's livery who yet are none of his servants, so there are many servants of this lust who yet will not wear its livery. All will acknowledge covetousness to be a sin, but not themselves to be covetous; and whereas the lusts of the flesh carry their names in their forehead, avarice weareth the badge of good husbandry, the complexion of frugality, whereby it is that men excuse themselves from the guilt of it. But whilst, if every man were his own judge, no man would be nocent, I fear the great Judge will scarce find any man innocent. Oh who almost is not bitten with this mad dog? Some are given *over to*, and most are given *to*, this lust. One would think rich men should not be troubled with it; and yet you may as soon put out fire with fuel, as covetousness with riches. One would scarce imagine old men should be infected with it; and yet (an ancient\* observeth), *dum membra frigescent, cupiditas calescit, caro senescit, affectus juvenescit, finis vitæ vix imponit finem avaritiae*, the desire after gain is young and hot, whilst the man groweth old and cold, nor doth this lust extinguish before life. If we look into the Scripture, we shall not find any good man taxed with avarice: Noah was drunk, Lot incestuous, and Peter treacherous, but not (as Judas) out of covetousness; whereas, in this age, none more greedy than they who call themselves the godly. The truth is, though the 'power of godliness' be opposite to, yet 'the form of godliness' will easily consist with, it. No wonder if it too often lurk under holy garments and religious shows. Indeed, this disease is become epidemical; both poor and rich, young and old, profane and hypocrites, are sick of it.

For your further conviction, give me leave to put a few queries to you concerning this particular: 1. Perhaps you do not use unlawful means to be rich; but are you not discontented because riches do not flow in upon you? You covet not what is unjust; but do you not crave what is superfluous? You do not *avidè rapere aliena*, greedily snatch at what belongs to others; but do you not *cupidè servare vestra*, too niggardly lock up what is your own? Many think they cannot be to blame for saving their own; but men sin as well in not giving what they should, as in getting what they should not: and there is little difference in making wine of another man's grapes, and being drunk with our own. 2. Perhaps you are not as bad as Vespasian, who, exacting tribute of the people for urine, said, *bonus odor lucri ex re qualibet*, gain is sweet out of anything; yet is not the gain of wealth more sweet to you than that of grace, and your desires far greater, *περὶ χροσίου*, than *Χρίστου*, after gain than after Christ? 3. You are not such holdfasts as to abridge yourselves of conveniences; but do you not forget the necessities of others? You say you are

\* Aristot. Eth. lib. iv. cap. i.

† Horat. Sat. l. ii.

‡ Aster. hom. de Avaritiâ.

\* Aster. l. d.



only good husbands, but whilst you pretend to be good husbands, are you not bad Christians, neglecting God's service to follow the world, scraping all you can for your relations, and imparting little or nothing to Christ's members? Were these questions duly pondered, I fear few would be able to acquit themselves from this lust, and whilst there is no Christian but condemneth covetousness, covetousness will condemn many, nay, most Christians.

Suffer, then, I beseech you, a word of dehortation: *ne cor tuum terræ virus infodias*, lury not yourselves alive in earthly desires. This world is as the highway, and it sounds but ill for one to be buried in the highway: whip this mammon out of the temple of your hearts, and let not the lust of the eyes have dominion over your souls. Indeed, there is none, not the best of us, but by what you have already heard, stands in need of this counsel, especially when riches flow in upon us. Oh how hard is it to enjoy this world's goods, and not doat upon them! Happy is the man who (to use Gregory Nyssen's comparison\*) is like the sea, which, notwithstanding the greatest flowing in of riches, keepeth its bounds which God hath set it, keeping his affection in a due moderation in the midst of earthly abundance.

To induce you hereunto, consider,

1. The lust of getting is insatiable. There is no such word as *enough* in the worldling's dictionary. As it is the sin of the covetous, so it is his punishment, that his desire cannot be replenished. It is Solomon's assertion, Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, and he that loveth abundance with increase;' suitable to which is that in Ecclesiasticus,† a covetous man's eye is not satisfied with his portion; and that of the poet,

*Crescit amor nummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.*

A covetous man (to use Antiochus his comparison‡) is like the sea, into which many rivers pour themselves, yet it is still receiving. To those three things, Prov. xxxi. 15, 16, which 'are never satisfied, and four that say it is not enough, the grave, the barren womb, the dry earth, and the fire,' we may well add as a fifth, the covetous heart. It is strange, and yet true of such an one, his medicine is his malady; that which should quench doth increase his flame, whatever he gets is but like the putting of water into a vessel with holes, the punishment of Danaus his daughter; and though his desire be to get wealth, yet the wealth he gets doth but augment his desire.

2. The lust of keeping is unprofitable; it swells the principal to no purpose, and lessens the use to all purposes. The covetous man pretends to hoard up much for fear of want; and yet, after all his pains and purchase, he suffers that really which before he feared vainly, and by not using what he gets, he maketh that

to be actually present and necessary, which before was but future, contingent, and possible. Hence it is that, according to that known saying, *deest avaro tam quod habet quam quod non habet*,\* a mammonist wants as well what he hath as what he hath not; as he wants who hath meat and doth not eat it, as well as he who hath no meat to eat. He is one, *quem ubertas sterilem, abundantia inopem, inhumanum copia, divitiæ fecere mendicium*, whom plenty maketh needy, abundance indigent, fortune unfortunate, riches a beggar, and for fear of being miserable hereafter, he maketh himself miserable for the present; so justly is he called in our English language, a miser. Such a man is like one who hath a treasure delivered him, locked up and sealed with the royal seal, which he dareth not touch; or like those sisters which had an eye in their lox, and yet in the mean time saw nothing; or like Tantalus, he hath water running, apples growing by him, and yet drinketh not of the one, or feedeth of the other. Socinus hath, in this, well observed that this phrase, the *lust of the eyes*, serveth to shew the folly and misery of the covetous, who take a great deal of pains in heaping up riches, and have no benefit, but only the seeing of them. In this respect they are as so many wards, who have titles to great possessions, but not the actual enjoyment of them; or as the patriarchs' sacks, that had in them both corn and coin, but of no further use than to be worn out in keeping them.

3. This lust, both of getting and keeping, is,

(1.) Enslaving. The proverb saith, All things obey money, and, too often, they who possess it. What drudges are covetous men to their wealth! They have riches, saith Seneca excellently,† *sicut febrem habere dicimur, cum illa nos habeat*, as a man is said to have a fever; that is, his fever hath him. Whereas they should (to use St Jerome's ‡ phrase) *distribuere ut domini*, distribute their wealth as masters of it, they do *custodire ut servi*, keep it up as his servants. For which reason gold and silver to such men are said by St Cyprian § to be *preciosa suppletia*, glorious fetters; and by Diogenes to be βέβηχος χρύσεος, golden halters; and most aptly Prosper,|| *ferreum jugum*, an iron yoke, which will the better appear if you consider further, that this lust is,

(2.) Tormenting. The covetous muckworm is distracted with cares, disquieted with fears, perplexed with continual thoughts, how he should keep what he hath got, what he shall do when he is old, how he may add to his heaps! This lust of the eyes will not suffer his eyes to sleep, nor his eyelids to close. *Pauper erat* (saith Austin ¶) *et securè dormiebat, somnus facilis accedebat*, When he was poor he slept securely, his sleep came upon him easily; but now he can take no

\* Chryst. Ser. 104.

† Sen. Ep. 119.

|| Prosp. de vitâ contempl. lib. ii. cap. xi.

¶ Aug. Sermon. 110, de Temp.

‡ Hieron. Ep.

§ Cyp. Ep. 2.

\* Greg. Nyss. hom. i. in Eccl.      ‡ Antioch hom. viii.

† Ecclus. xiv. 19.

rest day nor night, it bereaves his mouth of food, his body of ornaments, yea, his eyes of sleep, and his heart of joys ; so that in the midst of his silver chests and golden bags he is as at a funeral feast, where, though there be abundance of cheer, there is no mirth. Ay, and which is yet saddest of all, all these, as Isidore Pelusiotæ well observeth,\* are but the beginnings of future torments. In which respect the covetous man is in a far worse condition than the voluptuous ; for whereas the voluptuous man hath an heaven of pleasure now, though an hell of torment hereafter, the covetous man hath a double hell : an hell of vexing care, galling fear, in this world ; an hell of unspeakable horror and anguish in the other. Add to all which, that this lust is,

(3.) Infatuating. It was a miracle that our Saviour wrought upon the blind man, to restore his sight by clay ; sure I am, white and yellow clay, instead of opening, blind most men's eyes. The Latins say that *avidus* is *a non videndo*, and covetous Midas, who fondly desired that whatsoever he touched might be gold, is so called in the Greek *quasi*, *μηδὲν ἰδὼν*, from seeing nothing. If Samson's eyes had not been bored out by the Philistines, he would never have been their miller, nor would men grind in the mill of this world, exhaust their strength, their time in scraping a little pelf, were not their minds blinded with the love of money. In one word, this lust is not only foolish, but

(4.) Cursed, as being directly opposite to all those virtues which our Saviour hath reckoned up as giving a title to blessedness, Mat. v. 3-11. The mammonist's hunger and thirst is not after righteousness, but gold. Instead of a pure heart, he hath a foul, dirty soul ; he is a mourner, but it is only when his trading doth not thrive and riches increase. He careth not for poverty of spirit, but fulness in his purse, all his mercy is to pity and spare his gold ; he is so far from being a peacemaker that he will go to law for a penny, and he resolveth to suffer no persecution but what is from his own fretting and raging lust. Indeed, the one of these qualifications is true, but it is only in part. Men revile him, and speak evil of him, but it is not falsely but justly, for Christ's sake, but his money's sake, and therefore his reproaches are so far from rendering him blessed that they make him the more cursed ; and however this wretched caitiff, like him in the poet, applaud himself while the people point and hiss at him, yet the time will come when God shall upbraid him with his folly, laugh at his calamity ; and then, though too late, he shall bewail, and abhor, and condemn himself.

What now remaineth but that, since the denying this worldly lust appeareth so reasonable, we resolve upon it, and for our better execution of this resolution remember these lessons :

1. Get a contented mind. The author to the Hebrews, chap. xiii. 5, hath aptly joined them to-

\* Isid. Pelus. lib. ii. Ep. 233.

gether, ' Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have, requiring no doubt the latter in order to the former. What are all of us in this world but as so many strangers and pilgrims ; why should we care for more than money to defray our charges ? We are under the providence of a gracious Father, why should we not be content with what he seeth convenient for us ? Certainly that shoe is not best which is the greatest, but which is fittest for the foot ; nor that garment which is longest or most gorgeous, but that which sets closest to the body.\* Let our portion content us, and then the lust of the eyes will not domineer over us.

2. Labour for a charitable heart. Make not the mammon of unrighteousness your friend by loving it, but make you friends of the mammon of unrighteousness by giving it. One desire will thrust out another, the good lust of giving and distributing will expel the bad lust of getting and keeping. St Austin's counsel concerning riches is excellent, *Si absint, ne per malu opera quarantur in terra ; si adsint, per bona opera serventur in celo* : if they be wanting, seek them not in earth by evil works ; if they be present, lay them up in heaven by good works. If you will needs be laying up of riches, let it be in the safest place, in heaven, Mat. vii. 14 (as our Saviour directeth us), and that is, by laying them out for the poor's relief. If you must needs see your riches, let it be upon the backs of the naked, and the tables of the hungry ; this is the only commendable lust of the eyes.

3. Judge righteous judgment concerning those things with which you are so enamoured, to which end shut the eye of your sense, and open the eye of your reason. Tully writeth of a people, who, when they went to the field, were wont *pugnare clausis oculis*, to fight with their eyes shut. It might be cowardice in them, it would be wisdom in us, to shut our eyes, not to look too much on those objects, lest they ensnare us. When the devil thought to tempt Christ to the utmost, he ' shewed him all the kingdoms and glory of the world.' It is ill looking on the world, especially when it putteth on its holiday apparel. No wonder if David, when he desireth that his ' heart may not be inclined to covetousness,' prays also, ' Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.' Or if you will look upon these things, let it be with the eye of reason, or rather faith, to see the vanity and vexation of them. Look not upon their pompous outside, but their rotten inside, and then you will find them like hangings, which on the one side have pictures of kings and queens curiously wrought, but on the other side rags and patches.

4. Finally, lift up your eyes to heaven, by a due meditation of things above. Anatomists observe that there is a musele in mau's eye, more than in any other creature's, by which he is able to look up. Man in the

\* Fortunam velut tunicam proba magis concenciam quam longam.—*Apul.*



Greek language is called ἀνθρωπος, παρὰ τὸ ἀνα ἀθεῖν; and Plato saith,\* ἀνθρωπος is, as it were, ὁ ἀναθρων ὀπαπὸς, one that lifts up his countenance; to which agreeth that of the poet,

Os homimi sublime dedit.

Oh let our bodily constitution mind us of an heavenly disposition. *Terram despicit qui caelum aspicit*, he will have earth under his foot who hath heaven in his eyes.

\* Plat. in Crat.

In one word, as Moses, Heb. xi. 26, so let us, ἀποβλέπειν εἰς, look off from this land we possess to the promised land; that, having respect to that recompence of reward, we may disrespect the treasures of Egypt; and taking daily walks upon mount Zion, all these things, silver, gold, houses, lands, goods, riches, may be little and vile in our eyes. So shall we be delivered from this second venomous corruption, the lust of the eyes.

## SERMON XLII.

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*—1 JOHN II. 15, 16.

**A**MONG those many excellent rules which belong to the divine art of preaching, this is not of least concernment, that ministers should not content themselves with generalities, either in dissuading evil or persuading good. Virtues and vices are then rightly handled, when our sermons are not like shadows, which represent obscurely and confusedly, but as glasses, or rather pictures, setting them forth in their distinct lineaments. It is a known maxim in logic, *Latet dolus in universalibus*, there is a great deal of ambiguity, and consequently deceit, in universal propositions. And though exhortations at large to serve God, mortify the flesh, and condemn the world, are in themselves true and good, yet if not more particularly discussed, the auditors will be too apt to deceive themselves, by imagining they have learnt those lessons, to which, perhaps, they are mere strangers. For this cause it was that St Paul, exhorting the Colossians to 'mortify their earthly members,' Col. iii. 5, 6, proceeds to a punctual enumeration of those members; and not only those of the grossest and worst sort, but those which seem, at least in man's eye, of less guilt; and to instance no further, for this very reason, no doubt, it was that our apostle contents not himself in generals to dehort worldly love, but annexeth a special discovery of the several lusts by which it reigneth in the hearts and lives of the wicked: 'Love not the world, for all that is in the world, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes,' &c.

The third and last of these lusts is that which now cometh to be handled; for the unfolding whereof I shall discuss the *quid nominis* and the *quid rei*, the reason of the phrase and the nature of the thing.

1. In reference to the phrase here used, ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, 'the pride' or ostentation 'of life,' there are three queries to be resolved:

(1.) Why doth not the apostle continue the same phrase of ἐπιθυμία, it being a sinful lust which is reprov'd in this as well as in the former? To which I conceive may rationally be answered, that it would

have been too narrow an expression, since the seat of pride extends itself further than the desire, whereas the lust of the flesh lodgeth in the sensitive. Pride is in the rational part; and whereas the lust of the eyes resideth in the affective, pride (as will appear in handling) is as well in the intellectual as in the affective faculty.

(2.) Why doth not the apostle rather make choice of ἐπερηφανία, a word that signifieth the inward as well as the outward pride, than ἀλαζονεία, which (as we shall afterwards find) most properly points at the outward? \* To which may be returned, that it is not as if the inward pride were excluded, which is indeed chiefly intended, but probably because this sin is of such a nature as it usually loveth to shew itself; nor is it satisfied unless others take notice of it. Men are for the most part ashamed of the lust of the flesh, and therefore either they restrain, or, as much as they can, conceal, the actings of it; and the lust of the eyes loveth to lurk in corners; but pride knoweth not how to forbear the discovery of itself to others. She delights not to stay at home, but walketh abroad to be seen of others; even then when she counterfeits humility, it is usually so gross that it appeareth to be counterfeit.

(3.) Once more, it may be inquired why it is called, not barely pride, but the pride of life; in answer to which interpreters do somewhat vary.

The note of Salmeron is too much strained, who would have it called the pride of life, because pride commands even life itself, and maketh men willing rather to lose their life than their greatness. Sure, what St Paul saith of his religious glorying, the proud man saith of his vain-glorying, 'It were better for me to die than that my glorying should be void.'

Alexander Hales his fancy† is, that since *per se vivere*, to live of one's self, is proper to an intellectual creaturo, and only an intellectual creaturo is capable

\* Al. Al. l. d.

† Ibid.

of pride, therefore it is called the pride of life; but this is too far fetched.

Possibly there might be the same reason of the *τὸ βίου* as of the *ἀλαζονεία*, therefore the pride of life, because this sin, though it have its rise from the heart, yet it appeareth in the life.

Some\* conceive it is called the pride of life, because *semper vivit vigetque*, it is a sin that is always lively and vigorous, from first to last, from the cradle to the crutch. There are some sins that are peculiar to several ages, but this first saluteth and last leaveth us. Our Saviour set a little child in the midst of his disciples to teach them humility; sure it was a very little one, for even children are apt to be proud, and as we grow in years pride gets head, nay, it then flourisheth when the body withereth.

But, lastly and chiefly, therefore the pride of life, *quia quæ sunt in presenti vitâ bona de quibus homo superbit*, they are commonly the things of this life, which are the fuel of pride. To this agreeth the Syriac version, 'the pride of this life,' and that animadversion of Vorstius, who observes that *βίος*, signifying both *life* and *wealth*, which is of greatest concernment to this life. It may be rendered either way, since, as they are the things of this life, so wealth is that especially in which men are most apt to pride themselves.

Indeed, there is a spiritual as well as a carnal pride, and this is a secret venom, subtle evil (as the father† calls it), being as a moth in our graces and the rust of our virtues. In this respect it is truly said, that as repentance is the best fruit of the worst root sin, so pride is the worst fruit of the best root grace; but usually birth, beauty, strength, wit, learning, lands, honours, and such like, become the incentives of our pride. Thus Herod was proud of his eloquence, Ahithophel of his policy, Goliath of his might, Nebuchadnezzar of his palace, Sennacherib of his victories, and Haman of his honour. That the things of the other life, the graces of the Spirit, occasion pride, it is altogether accidental, since in their own nature they prompt to humility; and therefore, as boughs which are most laden with fruit hang down their heads, and vessels that are fullest make the least noise, so they that are richest in grace are poorest in spirit; indeed, it is rather the show than the truth, the appearance than the reality, of grace, which lifts men up. They are the things of this present life, which as in their own nature they are apt, so through the compliance of our nature they frequently do, engender pride, and thus not one or few but many. All the things of this life are such as men pride themselves in. The lust of the flesh is limited by its end, which is to content the flesh; the lust of the eyes, by its instrument, which is the eye; but pride of life is of an universal and illimited influence. This whole life, with all the things in it, is but sphere enough for pride to move in; the other lusts have their particular objects: the lust of

\* Riber.

† Bern. in Ps. *Qui habet*.

the flesh sensual pleasures, the lust of the eyes worldly riches, but pride of life, though it principally look at honours, yet it runs through the objects of the other lusts, men being apt to glory in their furnished tables, in their replenished coffers, yea, in every good thing they enjoy. So great need is there of the prophet Jeremiah's caution, chap. ix. 23, 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man glory in his strength, nor the rich man glory in his wealth.' And thus I have given a despatch of the *quid nominis*, the reason of the phrase, which was the first thing proposed.

2. Proceed we now to that which is the principal, the *quid rei*, the consideration of the thing, and inquire what this sin of pride is in its utmost latitude; for so we are here to look upon it, being set down as one of the three capital lusts which infect the race of mankind.

For the resolution of which I must make use of that distinction which Peraldus hath framed to my hand,\* and hath been already intimated. Pride is either internal or external; that is (properly) the pride of the heart, this the pride of life; that is both in the understanding and the affection, and this (especially) in the words of the mouth and apparel of the body; all of which are within the compass of that which is here called the pride of life.

(1.) Begin we with internal pride, and that,

[1.] As situated in the understanding, and so it is nothing else but a false opinion, and surpassing estimation of a man's own excellencies. This is observable in the etymology of *ὑπερηγανία*, which is from *ὑπέρ* and *γάνουμαι*, when a man appeareth to himself (and would to others) above what really he is; and of *ἀλαζονεία* (the word in my text), which is from *α*, *epitaticum*, and *λαζομαι*, *sumo*, when a man doth assume to himself what belongs not to him. In this respect pride may well be called an unnatural tumour, puffing a man up as if he had eaten a spider. Indeed, what wind is to the bladder, leaven to the dough, and poison to the body, that is pride to the mind, swelling it up with high conceits of its own worth, in the apprehension of what it either hath or doth, enjoyeth or performeth.

More particularly, this overweening opinion is, as the schools from St Gregory† well observe, either,

1. *Ex parte rei*, in regard of the things themselves, whenas we think ourselves to have that excellency which indeed we have not, to wit, either not at all, or else not in that measure which we fancy.

(1.) Some are so proud that they attribute to themselves what is no way theirs, like the fly in the fable, which, sitting on the axle-tree of the coach wheel, cried out, What a dust do I raise! This was the Laodicean temper, which said, Rev. iii. 17, she was 'rich, and increased with goods, and had need of

\* Perald de Virtut. et. vit.

† Greg. Mor xxiii. Aquin. 1a. 1æ. ix. 26, art. iv.



nothing, whenas she was miserable and wretched, poor, blind, and naked.' What is this but as if a blackamoor should fancy herself a beauty, and a pigmy imagine himself to be a giant.

(2.) Others, yea, very many, look upon themselves in multiplying and magnifying glasses, whereby it is that their pence seem pounds, mites talents, and according to the proverb, geese swans. This was the pharisee's pride, who thought himself holier, and Rabshakeh's, who accounted himself mightier, than indeed he was.

The truth is, an error in the defect is pardonable, to think more meanly; but in the excess abominable, to think more highly of our endowments or enjoyments, than they deserve in themselves. For what is it but as if a novice should pretend himself to be a doctor; nay, as if a peasant dream that he is a monarch.

2. *Ex parte cause*, in regard of the causal influence upon whatsoever excellences is in, or belonging to, us: and this is when men account themselves either as the principal efficient, or as the meritorious causes, of any good.

(1.) Some are so proud as to 'sacrifice to their own nets,' and look upon themselves as the originals of their own welfare. God complaineth of the Israelites, Hos. ii. 8, 'She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil,' reproving her ingratitude; but the proud man goeth further, and owneth himself as the author of his enjoyments and achievements. 'Is not this great Babel which I have built?' saith Nebuchadnezzar.

Dextra mihi Deus et telum,

said Mezentias, my own right hand got me the victory.

(2.) More are so proud as though they acknowledge their good things to be of God's communicating, yet so as that they are of their own deserving. These think God rather beholding to them than they to him, and look upon all blessings, not as the gifts of bounty, but rewards of service. Like to that proud friar who said, *Da Domine quod debes*, Lord, pay what thou owest me, even when he desired admission into those heavenly mansions.

Besides this pride of the mind, there is yet further considerable, a pride in the passions of hope, love, and desire.

1. Pride, as in the passion of hope, is that which we call presumption. Indeed, presumption of God's mercy is a fruit of infidelity, because we do not rightly conceive of God's attributes, nor firmly believe his threatenings; but a presumption of our own ability is a branch of arrogancy and pride. It is no wonder if self-conceit be accompanied with self-confidence, and he that assumeth too much do presume too much upon himself. Hence it is that men think, with those Babel-builders, they can rear a fabric as high as heaven; or, with Antiochus, that they can sail on the earth, and walk on the water; do things which are

impossible, far beyond the reach of their power, as if a fish should attempt to fly, or a beast to speak.

2. Pride, as in the passion of love, is a fond dotage upon our own excellences; and this, by St Austin,\* is set down as the definition of that which most properly is called pride, *amor proprie excellentia*, the immoderate love of a man's own qualifications; Narcissus-like, to be enamoured with our own shadow, and admire our own beauty. Indeed, to be well-pleased with our own condition, whatever it is, is an act of humble contentation, and very commendable; but to be carried with an affectionate admiration of our own endowments, as if none were like them, is an act of proud affection, and justly blameable.

3. Pride, as in the passion of desire, is nothing else, in general, but an inordinate and perverse appetite after excelling and going beyond others. Indeed, in some kind, this desire cannot be perverse, though it be vehement: namely,

(1.) When it is in spirituals. A desire to go beyond others in virtue, to excel them in graces, is praiseworthy; we must strive to be as holy and religious, as just and charitable, as sober and temperate, as the best; and it is a commendable emulation to vie one with another in these practices.

(2.) When it is in mentals. In matters of knowledge (so it be not like Adam's desire to be as God), we may desire and endeavour to outstrip others; to be as subtle as the acutest sophister, as intelligent as the profoundest doctor, as eloquent as the politest orator, is a lawful endeavour. But, in temporals and externals, a desire of surpassing others in any kind is very prone to be inordinate, and, when it is so, deserveth no better a name than this of pride.

In particular, there are two principal branches of this pride in desire, when it is of dignity above, and authority over others, or of praise and glory from others: the former of which is called ambition (and so St Cyprian reads the word here†), and the latter vainglory. Of each a word,

[1.] The pride of ambition is an exorbitant desire of power and greatness. Indeed, we may *accipere*, receive that dignity which is cast upon us, but we must not *arripere*, snatch at, and be greedy of, preferment; it is not to be denied but that there is a lawful desire of power and place. St Paul saith, 2 Tim. iii. 1, 'He that desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a worthy work;' and, no doubt, it is a worthy desire, if rightly qualified. But it is then the pride of life,

1. Whenas it is only *præesse*, but not *prodesse*, that we may be great, but not that we may do good; only of the dignity, and not of the duty which attends it. Or,

2. When men of low deserts have high desires of grasping that sceptre, which they are not fit or worthy to manage; soaring high, when yet they want wings. Or,

3. When no place will content us but the highest;

\* Aug. de Civit. Dei. lib. xiv. cap. xxxii.

† Ambitio sæculi.—*Cypr.*

so that we will not endure either superior or equal ; as Alexander, who told Darins the heaven had but one sun, and the earth must have but one Alexander. This being the temper of a proud man, when he is got up to the top to pull up the ladder, that none may come after him, but that he may rule alone, and have all in his own hauds.

4. Or, which is yet worst of all, when this desire puts men upon evil ways, and unlawful means of attaining, making that of the poet their principle, *violandum est jus regni gratiâ*, right may be dispensed with, where it is to gain a kingdom.

[2.] The other branch of this pride is the desire of vain glory, from which the apostle dehorts the Galatians, chap. v. 26. Indeed, it is one thing to desire glory, and another to desire *vain* glory. Great men may lawfully expect that honour and respect from others, which is due to the place and station in which God hath set them. Every man may desire praise and commendation from others, for those good actions that are done by him. St Paul plainly alloweth it, when he assureth eternal life to them who, 'by well-doing, seek for honour and glory.' But if you will know when it is a desire of vain glory, and so pride of life, I answer with the casuists,\* that the sinfulness of this desire is considerable three ways :

1. *Ex parte ejus qui*, in regard of him who desireth it, whenas,

(1.) He maketh it his principal aim, terminating in himself. It is one thing to do good works, *so as* they may be seen, another to do them *that* they may be seen ; it is one thing to do them that they may be seen for our own glory, it is another to do them that they may be seen for God's glory ; finally, it is one thing to make our own honour a subordinate encouragement to, and another to set it up as the ultimate end of, our good actions. The former is allowable, but the latter abominable.

(2.) His desire after it is accompanied with a peevish anger at those who give him not the praise and honour he expects, like Haman, who was mad because he could not have Mordecai's knee ; and Ahithophel, who is so discontented as to hang himself, because his wisdom was undervalued in the not following his counsel. Indeed, the proud man, contrary to St Paul's rule of giving, is altogether for taking honour ; and which is very absurd, though he will not give honour to others, yet he taketh it very ill if others give it not to him.

2. *Ex parte ejus de quo*, in regard of that for which he desireth glory. Thus,

(1.) When men, according to St Paul's expression, Philip. iii. 19, 'glory in their shame,' expect to be applauded for their evil deeds, and gather the grapes of praise upon the thorns of vices.

(2.) Or when they desire more commendation than their actions (though good) deserve, thinking that

\* Laym. Theol. Mor. lib. iii. art. 3.

others should value them as they do themselves ; as if not the merit of our works, but the estimation we have of them, were to be the rule of others' judgment.

3. *Ex parte ejus à quo*, in regard of him from whom we desire praise. And thus,

(1.) When according to the character which is given of the hypocritical Jew, Rom. ii. 20, our 'praise is not of God, but of men,' we regard more to approve ourselves to the world than to God ; whereas our aim should be to find approbation, first in the court of God, then of conscience, then of men.

(2.) When among men, we desire praise, not of the learned, but the ignorant, who are not competent judges ; not of the good, but of the bad, whose praise indeed is a dispraise, and by speaking well of us, disparage us.

And thus I have given you an account of the first kind of pride, which I proposed to handle, namely, internal. By which it appeareth that her chariot is drawn with four horses, self-estimation, arrogant presumption, haughty ambition, and vain glory.

Pass we on to the other sort, which is called external pride. Not to enlarge in all those ways whereby pride doth manifest itself, I shall only insist on two, which are most usual, and to which indeed the word in the text prompts us, namely, in language and apparel.

1. Pride having her imperial throne in the will, commands the whole man, especially the tongue, to vent her swelling words. One of the characters which St Paul giveth of the men of the last times is, that they shall be boasters, 2 Tim. iii. 3 : where the word is from the same root with this in the text ; suitable to which it is that the Greeks tell us he is properly *ἀλάζων*, who useth stately language, and a vain pomp of splendid words, in proclaiming his own worth and abilities.

Now this is either in praising or promising.

1. To praise ourselves for what we either have or do, except when it is in way of a just and needful apology, is no other than the language of pride ; and therefore it was good counsel of Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 2, 'Let another man's mouth praise thee, and not thine own.' In the law every open vessel which had no covering found upon it was unclean ; an emblem of the proud persom, *qui per studium ostentationis patens, nullo velamine taciturnitatis operitur*, who hath an open mouth to vent and vaunt his own virtues, though hereby he doth not, nay, undoth, what he is doing, discommending himself by his self-commendation. Those words of holy Job, chap. xxxi. 7, 'If my mouth hath kissed my hand,' are not unfitly moralised to this purpose.\* Our mouth kisseth our hand when (like hens which cackle when they lay) our tongue blazons our own actions. Indeed, sometimes pride puts men upon dispraising and undervaluing themselves ; but even then they put praise to usury,

\* Manus symbolum operationis.—Pined.



it being for this end, that they may receive it from others with advantage.

(2.) It is no less evidently a badge of pride when men are golden-tongued, and leaden-handed; make large promises of things which they are no way able to perform; learning herein of their father the devil, who, shewing Christ the kingdoms and glory of the world, told him, 'All these will I give thee,' when yet none of them were in his power to give. To this (as Ulpian tells us) the signification of the Greek word here used extends. Indeed, such kind of promises argue men, at the worst, deceitful impostors; at the best, vainglorious boasters.

2. Besides this pride of language, there is another which is far more frequent, to wit, the pride of apparel. Indeed, it is strange that any should make apparel the fuel of their pride. We all know that garments are but things about us, not inhering in, but adhering to, us. So that to be proud of that is as if an horse should be proud of his trappings, nay more, we are beholden for them to other creatures: sheep for the wool, worms for our silk, and the like. So that to be proud of them is as if a man should be proud of another's parts, nay, which is yet worse, they were occasioned by sin. In which respect the Hebrews derive the noun *גָּד*, which signifieth a garment, from the verb *גָּדַד*, which signifieth to deal perfidiously; so to be proud of them is as if a thief should be proud, because he is burnt in the hand. What more absurd than to boast of what is extraneous, nay, borrowed; nay, to glory in that which is a monitor of our shame? And yet, what more usual than this kind of pride? Which would therefore so much the rather be reprov'd, because it is so commonly practised. Nor shall I swerve from my text to meet with this sort of proud persons, since the peacock's pride, which is in her gaudy feather, according to that of the poet,

*Laudatas ostentat avis Junonia pennas,*

is an emblem of this pride in apparel. And the Greek epithet, *πᾶσι ἀλάζων*, which they give the peacock on this account, is near akin to the word in my text.

For the better understanding of this sort of pride, whereby we may pass a just censure upon ourselves (for I would have none too forward in judging others upon this or any other account), be pleased to take notice of these particulars:

1. It is not to be denied but that apparel in itself is of an indifferent nature, either as to moral goodness or badness, whether it be of this or that matter, form, or colour. Though garments came in by sin, yet they are not in themselves sinful.

2. It is very laudable for some persons to wear costly apparel. God hath stored the wardrobe of nature not only with induments, but ornaments, which may no doubt be accordingly made use of. When

St Peter, 1 Peter iii. 3, adviseth women that their 'adorning should not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, of wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel,' it is not to be understood as an absolute, but a comparative prohibition. Otherwise, no doubt, it is necessary to put an apparel, and lawful for some women to wear gold, and use outward adorning.

3. It is not unlawful in some sort to conform to the fashion of the place wherein we live. When St Paul would not have us 'conform to the world,' he meaneth in things sinful, not indifferent. The truth is, there is a possibility of pride in not following the fashion, to wit, when it is through affectation of singularity; and there may be a following the fashion without pride, to wit, when it is only to avoid being singular; yea, in one case it may be necessary, namely, where there is an intervening injunction of a superior (as king, husband, parent, or the like) in reference to any fashion which is otherwise indifferent.

4. But still there is nothing more true than that there is a great deal of pride in apparel, and that both in the costliness and fashionableness of it.

1. In the costliness. If you ask what is worth most and cost least? I answer, humility; if what is worth least and cost most? I answer, pride. The proud man expends too much upon his clothing, that whereas our Saviour saith, 'the body is more worth than raiment,' it may be said of him, his raiment is more worth than his body, like the bird of paradise, whose feathers are of more value than the carcase. More particularly, this costliness of our apparel is a sign of pride, whenas it is

(1.) Above the measure of our estate. When they that are not able to buy cloth will wear silk; nay, they will starve their bodies to adorn their backs, and rather than this shall want superfluities, the other shall want necessaries.

(2.) Above the quality of our state. 'Soft clothing is for them that are in king's houses.' It is not for peasants to wear robes, nor them that sit on the dunghill to be clothed in scarlet. In which respect St Jerome looked upon it as a thing worthy of laughter, or rather sorrow, the handmaids went finer than their mistresses.\*

2. In the fashionableness. And thus to be curious and speedy in following, much more to be ringleaders and inventors of, fashions, yea, to conform to any which are beyond the bounds of modesty and decency, is at best a badge of pride. And here I cannot but condemn all such fashions as are the attire of harlots, or garbs of ruffians, as tend to make us appear of another sex, or complexion, colour, shape; then indeed we are to be at least indecent, if not immodest, and so sad signs, that if not wantonness, yet pride dwelleth within.

I have at length drawn before you those several

\* *Digna res risu, imo planetu, dominā ancilla procedit ornatio.*—*Hier. Ep. ad Demetr.*

lines which meet in this centre. And now I would to God there were not just cause of a general humiliation for this sin of pride, it being that passion which infects almost all of all sorts. The question of Solomon, 'Who can say I have made my heart clean? I am pure from sin,' may be truly put by every one to himself concerning this sin; he that saith he is pure from it is probably most guilty of it. That in the Psalms, of 'sitting in the seat of the scorers,' is read by the vulgar Latin, 'in the chair of pestilence;' upon which St Austin ingeniously observeth\* to our present purpose, the seat of the proud scorers may well be called the chair of pestilence, because that disease is infectious, and commonly proveth epidemical. *Ita ferè nemo est, qui careat amore dominandi, et humanam non appetat gloriam*, there is scarce any man who is not in some kind or other desirous of pre-eminency and glory.

There want not some wicked men who are proud of their vices, please themselves in, and would have others applaud them for their black spots; and even good men are too often proud of their virtues. In which respect Prosper observeth,† that they who have overcome other lusts, are yet foiled with this, whilst after their best deeds they are apt, *in se potius quam in Domino gloriari*, to glory not in the Lord, but in themselves. The scholar is proud of his learning, which, like wine, fumeth into his head; and the fool is oftentimes proud and self-conceited, notwithstanding his ignorance. Pride (especially that of apparel) hath been heretofore the sin of women, thus the prophet taxeth the haughty daughters of Sion, Isa. iii.; but in our days, it is no less the crime of men; the male being as much, if not more, fantastic than the female. Finally, not only masters and mistresses, but, as the poet complained,

*Maxima quæque domus servis est plena superbis,*

even servants, who are in a low condition, yet have high minds.

We have all too great reason in this particular to cry guilty. Oh let us accuse, abhor, and condemn ourselves for this sin, and at last learn to be meek and lowly within, in our thoughts and desires; without, in our language and deportment. The more effectually to dissuade from this lust, consider we how boundless, devilish, and deadly a sin it is.

1. What hath been already observed of avarice is no less true of pride, it is never satisfied. Whence those so often renewed fashions in our garments, but because pride will not be long contented with one? What is the reason men never think they are valued by others according to their worth, nor advanced according to their deserts, but because pride is aspiring? No stair pleaseth the ambitious man whilst there is an higher. He is no sooner laid in his bed of honour but he dreams of greater preferment. How

\* Aug. in Ps. i.

† Prosp. Ep.

obvious is this in all kinds of advancement, ecclesiastical, civil, military. Take an instance in one for all. The officer must be a captain, the captain a colonel, the colonel a general, and then he must have an higher title, to which end he leapeth from martial to civil honour, nor will anything less serve him at last than a crown; nay, then, not content to rule at home, he will stretch his power as far as the Indies. Yea, he would be honoured and adored as a god; and still he is discontent because he is not omnipotent, and cannot do all his will, which is, were it in his power, to depose the supreme Monarch of heaven and earth. Thus the proud mind knoweth no limits. And what wise man would give way to that which, being boundless, must needs be restless, and create continual cares, fears, and troubles to the mind? In which regard it is called by St Bernard aptly†, *ambitium crux*, the cross and torment of those who pursue it.

2. Besides, which may render this lust so much the more hateful to us is, that it is the sin wherein of all others the devil is most delighted. Indeed, the proud man, like a mountain between the sun and the valley, *umbram facit diabolo*, maketh a shadow wherein the devil loveth to repose himself; and no wonder, since it is most properly his lust. In which respect St Bernard saith of the proud pharisee, who said of himself, 'I am not as other men,' therefore as the devils. And to the same purpose St Gregory,‡ He that will not be like, but above other men, becomes like the apostate angels.

3. Lastly, where pride is in the saddle, shame and ignorance is in the crupper. Proud men, like chaff, fly aloft, till at the length the wind of God's wrath scatter them. Pride cast the first of creatures (angels) out of heaven; the first of men (Adam) out of paradise; and the first Israelitish king (Saul) out of his throne.§ They say of the raven, that she carrieth the nut on high, and then by letting it fall, breaketh it; so doth the world, *erigendo dejicere*, destroy the proud man by advancing him. He ascends by little and little, but cometh down with a vengeance; and the higher he climbeth over others' heads, the sooner he breaketh his own neck. It is the temper of pride, it loveth to go before, and so it shall; but as Solomon truly prognostics, Prov. xvi. 18, 'Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty mind before a fall.' Witness ambitious Haman, arrogant Nebuchadnezzar, vaunting Goliath, vain-glorious Herod, blaspheming Rabshakeh, gorgeous Dives, and painted Jezebel. Humble thyself, therefore, O man, lest God humble thee in thy highest estates; keep thy heart lowly,

\* Innocent de contemptu mundi. lib. ii. cap. xxix.

† Bern ad. Eugen. lib. ii.

‡ Apostate angelo similis efficitur, qui similis hominibus nolit esse — *Greg. M.*

§ Adam dum rapero voluit divinitatem, amisit felicitatem. — *Ibid.*



ever remembering that humility is both thy honour, and the security of that honour.

To this end be persuaded to look upon yourselves,

1. As men. *Quid superbis, terra et cinis?* Why shouldst thou, who art earth at first and ashes at last, be proud? It was well spoken by him to king Philip, after a great victory, that if he did measure his shadow, he should find it no longer than it was before, and it was well done of that king to appoint that one should often sound in his ears, Remember you are a man.

2. As Christians, and so obliged to conform to Christ, who in particular calls upon us to learn of him, because he is meek and lowly. Why art thou so gaudy in apparel, when thy Saviour was content with a plain coat? Why shouldst thou exalt thyself, whereas thy Redeemer humbled himself? Finally, why shouldst thou aspire to be a lord, when Christ took upon him the form of a servant?

And because, notwithstanding all these considerations, we are still apt to be ensnared, let us, according to that excellent counsel of our Saviour, 'watch and pray,' ever suspect thy deceitful heart, and take heed of everything thou either hast or dost, lest it puff thee up. Plato, being mounted upon a horse, and judging himself a little touched with pride upon it, presently lighted off and would ride no further. St Jerome tells us of Hilarion,\* that having done many excellent cures, for which the people flocked after him, he wept, lest by this means he should grow proud, and so lose his reward. Oh, let us watch our hearts in all our enjoyments, in all our achievements, earnestly imploring the renewed assistance of grace against all temptations to this pride of life.

Having given you this particular account of these several lusts, I shall now look upon them together, and wind up all with a threefold observation.

1. This *all in the world*, which our apostle here mentioneth, concerneth only the flesh, and the eyes, and this present life. Whence Ferns hath ingeniously taken notice, This world hath nothing which can satisfy the soul.† Meats and drinks can no more feed the soul than painted dishes can the stomach. *Non corpus aurā, non cor auro*, the body may as soon be filled with air as the mind with gold; you may as soon find an armful in a shadow, as a heartfelt in honour.

2. Not only the outward works, but the inward lusts, are prohibited. Many there are who refrain from the action, and yet retain the affection. Some external motives impede the doing, whilst yet they burn with desire. But, alas, how vain and insufficient is this reformation! To what purpose are the branches cut off whilst the root remaineth? or, if the fountain be defiled, how can the streams be pure? It

\* Hierom. in vitā Hilarion.

† Mundus nihil habet, quod animæ accommodare possit.  
—*Per in loc.*

is God's call to Jerusalem, 'Wash thine heart from wickedness;' and St James would not only have sinners to 'cleanse their hands,' to wit, from external works, but the 'double-minded' to 'purify their hearts,' to wit, from internal lusts. In one word, had we only to do with men, it might suffice to have a care of our words and works, but since we have to do with God, there must be a regard of thoughts and desires.

3. Lastly, it is not the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eye, but *and*, to intimate to us, that any one of these denominate a man a lover of the world; and therefore it is not enough that we are free from one, but we must be without any of these lusts, to wit, reigning and ruling over us. I have read a story of an holy man, to whom an angel came with this message,\* *Veni, et ostendam tibi opera hominum*, come and I will shew thee the works of the sons of men. To this end he leads him first to a field, where he shewed him a man gathering sticks, making a bundle, and taking it on his shoulder to carry it; but finding it too weighty, he layeth it down and gathereth more, but then he could not so much as stir it. Then he leads him to a river, where he shewed him a man taking up water, and pouring it into a leaking vessel, which let it out as fast almost as it was put in. Then he led him to a temple, where he finds two men carrying a piece of wood cross, whereby neither could get in to the temple, whereas if one would have permitted the other to have gone before, both might have entered in. In these three sights we have a representation of these three lusts, the springs of those works: the first of the voluptuous, who continually gather sticks of the tree of pleasure, and are so bewitched that they leave not gathering, till the burden of them become at last intolerable; the second of the covetous, whose insatiable desire is like a vessel full of holes, which yet he is still endeavouring to fill; the third of the proud, who, whilst they will not suffer another to go before them, hinder each other from entering into that celestial temple.

Some there are who prostitute themselves (so far as they are consistent one with the other) to all these lusts. It is observed of the swan, that he hath a threefold habitation: the water, the earth, the air; a fit emblem of many sinners, who swim in the water of sensual pleasure, walk upon the earth by the feet of covetous affections, and fly in the air with the wings of pride.

Others there are who are only addicted to one of these lusts, whilst they are free from, nay, haters of, the other. Thus the voluptuous epicuro hateth to be covetous, the covetous mammonist abhorreth to be voluptuous, and some proud men hate both. 'We *all*,' saith the prophet, 'like sheep have gone astray, and turned every one to his own way.' Though all naturally go in a bad way, yet not in the same: some

\* Bibl. Patr. Apotheegn.

in the path of pride and others of curiosity, others of avarice and others of sensuality; but, if the enemy enter in at any one of these gates, he gets the castle. He that goeth in any of these paths is in the broad way,\* and he that is caught by any of these nets is the devil's slave. It will little avail the sensual man to say, I am not proud or covetous; or the proud man to say, I am not covetous or sensual; nor the covetous man to say, I am not sensual or proud. That threatening against Israel, 1 Kings xix. 17, 'Him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay, and him that escapeth the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay,' may be here fitly alluded to, and is too often verified. Him that escapeth the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes slayeth; and him that escapeth the lust of the eyes, the pride of life slayeth. It is oft-times in this case according to that of the prophet Amos, chap. v. 19, 'As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.' Many a man that abhorreth the lust of the flesh is ensnared by the lust of the eyes; and some, as St

\* Chrysost. hom. v. in Matth.

Ambrose observeth, *Quos nulla potuit vincere luxuria, nulla avaritia, subruere, ambitio facit criminosos*, whom neither luxury nor avarice could overcome, pride hath surprised and subdued, and therefore let our abstinence be universal, or else it cannot be effectual. Thus did Moses, Heb. xi. 24-26, when he 'chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season; when he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt; when, being come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.' Thus did Christ, when, to satisfy his hunger, he would not command stones to be bread; when he would not fall down and worship the devil, to gain all the kingdoms of the world; when he would not vain-gloriously cast himself down from the pinnacle, to shew himself the Son of God, Mat. iv. 3, 10. Thus must every Christian do in some measure. Then, and not till then, are we good scholars in the school of grace, when we have learnt to 'deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,' namely, 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.'

### SERMON XLIII.

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—1 JOHN II. 15.*

WHAT was the saying of those Jews upon the hearing of Christ's discourse, John vi. 60, I doubt, is the thought of many Christians upon the reading of this Scripture: 'This is an hard saying; who can hear it?' Promises of mercy tickle, but precepts of duty (such especially as are contrary to our lusts) grate the ear; the very hearing is irksome, but the practising much more. This is an hard saying; who can hear it? It is harder doing; who can perform it? True, the work is excellent, but withal difficult; it is a matter of moment, but not acted in a moment. To divert our corrupt natures from worldly love, is no less than to turn a stream, and that will ask no little time and pains. No wonder then if our apostle contents not himself with the bare mention of this duty, but withal annexeth strong inducements to the performance of it; that hearing not only what we are to do, but what great reason there is why we should do it, we might with the stronger resolution set about it. 'Love not the world. For if any man love the world,' &c.

It is that part of the text I am now come to, namely, the argumentation which our apostle adjoineth to his dehortation; which consists of two parts, or rather presents us with two arguments.

1. The first whereof is drawn from worldly love, its contrariety to that which is divine; and this is both asserted in the end of the fifteenth, and proved

in the end of the sixteenth, so that in this part there are two things offer themselves to our discussion:

An eminent point;

An evident proof; or, if you will, here is a double confirmation:

The one principal, which is the reason of the dehortation, in these words: 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

The other collateral, which is a reason of the reason, and is expressed in those words, 'is not of the Father, but of the world.'

At this time of the first, the principal confirmation, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' which words are so a proof, that they are withal a point well worthy my discussion and your attention. They are an universal negative proposition, wherein we are to take notice of the subject and the predicate, of *whom*, and *what* it is, that is here denied.

1. The subject of this proposition is every lover of the world. It is that I shall not need to insist upon, as having been already handled at large in the prohibition; only give me leave to mind you in a few words, that,

(1.) On the one hand this is to be restrained to the immoderate lovers of the world, who, wanting, excessively desire after, or having, unmeasurably delight in it. Indeed, it cannot be denied but that the very having of this world is dangerous; and therefore our Saviour asserts it is difficult for rich men to enter into



heaven; and St Paul saith, 'Not many mighty are called.' A large portion of worldly things, is like a long garment, which reaching to the foot retards men in their walking, nay, sometimes makes them stumble. But still, only the loving, not the having, of this world, no, nor yet the love of the world which is subordinate, but only that which is co-ordinate, and so inordinate, is inconsistent with the love of the Father. It is an excellent saying of St Bernard,\* *Sic vult amari Deus, ut cunctæ res simul amentur cum ipso; et sic vult amari, ut nihil præter ipsum ametur*, God will be so loved, that all things else may be loved with him; and yet so loved, that nothing be loved besides him; that is (as he fully explaineth it), he will have every creature to be loved, as from him; and it is himself he will have to be loved in every creature, and only such a love of the world as is in and for God consists with the love of God.

(2.) On the other hand, this is to be enlarged to all those several lusts which grow out of this root of worldly love; to wit, gluttony, ebriety, luxury, rapacity, tenacity, and curiosity, self-conceitedness, ambition, and vain-glory, all of which, wherever they are entertained, whether jointly or singly, will not suffer divine love to have any room in the heart. So that these words, 'If any man love the world,' may be thus paraphrased, and are accordingly to be understood: If any man inordinately lust after, and take delight in the pleasures, riches, or honours which this world affords. Or if you will, more particularly, if any man live in gluttony and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, sloth and idleness, rapine and covetousness, pride and ambition.

2. But that which is here especially to be unfolded, is the predicate, which is denied concerning all worldly lovers; to wit, the love of the Father.

The better to make way for the handling of this, be pleased to know, that the love of the Father may be construed either actively or passively: actively, the Father is the subject of this love, and him the object; passively, the Father is the object, and him the subject; and so here is a double negative in this one.

1. The worldly lover hath no interest in the Father's love. He may be in the warm sunshine, but it is without God's blessing; or rather, he may have the moonlight of outward comforts, but he wants the warm sunshine of God's favour. St Paul, 1 Tim. v. 6, saith of the widow that liveth in pleasure, that 'she is dead whilst she liveth;' so are all voluptuous epicures, as so many dead, nay, loathsome carcasses in God's account. The psalmist mentioning the covetous, Ps. x. 3, fasteneth this brand upon him, 'whom the Lord abhorreth.' He that sits in the heavens spurneth at them who creep upon the earth. Finally, St James, chap. iv. 6, speaking of the proud, asserts, that 'God resisteth him' (*ἀντιτάσσεται*, a military phrase); he setteth himself, as it were, in battle array, bidding

\* Bern. in eod. dom. serm. viii.

open defiance, and proclaiming war against the proud. In a word, he that will be the world's darling, loseth a friend of God.

A sad truth, and such as may justly strike terror and horror into the heart of every worldling. Indeed, however men soothe up themselves in their present prosperity, not regarding God's favour, whilst they enjoy the world's treasure, yet the day is coming when they shall know and acknowledge how infinitely miserable their condition is, for want of a smile from heaven; yea, when they would purchase a beam of God's love (were it possible) with a total and final abdication of all secular contentments. Alas, poor wretches, notwithstanding all the comfort they have for present, it is but night with them; and when the time comes that the moon and stars shall hide their heads, lose their light (methinks they should tremble to consider), in what a black night, of worse than Egyptian darkness, they shall be for ever involved, and that because the sun will deny his golden beams, God will eternally withhold his favour from them!

2. But though this be a very useful meditation, yet I conceive it is not here intended, since it is not said, the love of the Father is [not] *on*, but *in* him. And so the negation here asserted is, that the worldly lover hath no love of the Father in him.

Before I proceed further in the discussion of this point, it will be needful to take notice of the fitness of the phrase which our apostle useth, when he saith, 'the love of the Father.'

That by the Father is meant God, I suppose is obvious to every eye;\* nor would it be passed by that God is emphatically called the Father. Look as though there are other lives, yet the life to come is sometimes *ζωὴ ἐξ ὀφθῦν* called life; so though there are other fathers, yet here God is still the Father, as he to whom this primarily belongs. Other fathers are but the instruments, he is the principal efficient of our being. They are the fathers of our flesh, he is the Father of our spirits; they are but earthly, he is our heavenly Father; finally, they provide for us only for a time, he taketh care for our eternal welfare, and therefore eminently the Father.

Again, it would not be passed by that our apostle saith, not *your*, but *the* Father; since, though he is a Father, yet not to them who love the world. Indeed, they are oftentimes so presumptuous as to call him Father, but they are none of his children. These lusts, wherever they rule, are not the spots of God's children.

But that which would be here especially observed is, that our apostle, speaking of the love of God, calls it the love of the Father; nor is it without good reason, and that upon a double account.

1. To inform us under what notion chiefly God is the object of love. True indeed, in himself he is good, nay, goodness, which is love's object; but yet this

\* *Patris, i. e. celestis patris.—Dan.*

goodness is known to us by its communication, and it is good as known which causeth love; so that we love God chiefly under those merciful relations in which he stands to us. Nor is there any relation of greater goodness towards man than that of a father. He is our king, our master, our judge; but under these notions he is especially to be feared; as he is our Father, principally he is to be loved.

2. To insinuate how greatly we are obliged to love God rather than the world. The world, at the best, is but a servant; at the worst, our enemy. As our servant, it is to be used, not loved; at least, not with a choice love; as our enemy, it is to be, not loved, but hated, and trampled on. Now, God is our Father, and there is a natural affection due from children to their parents. Whom should we love, if not our father? So that to love the world before God is as if one should prefer his servant, nay, his enemy, before his friend, his Lord, his Father; than which what can be more monstrous? And when I find the apostle here dissnading from worldly love, upon the account of its inconsistency with the love of God, I am apt to believe that he purposely phraseth it 'the love of the Father,' to render the love of the world, which is so repugnant to the love of God, so much the more odious to us.

But to let go the phrase. The design of this proposition is manifest. There is no positive love of God in him in whom there is a superlative love of the world. He that loveth the world chiefly doth not love God truly; he that is a lover of pleasure, or wealth, or honour, more than God, is not at all a lover of God. Indeed, a worldling may be in show a saint, and (as far as words will go) a friend of God; so may an harlot seem kind to her husband, but as she who giveth her heart to another beareth no real love to her husband, so he who loveth the world hath no sincere affection to God. Upon which account St James, chap. iv. 4, calleth worldly sinners adulterers and adulteresses; so that to speak after our apostle's phrase elsewhere, 'He that saith he loveth the Father, and yet loveth the world, is a liar, and there is no truth in him.'

It is that, indeed, which holds true both ways; as it is with a pair of scales, the one goeth up, the other goeth down, so it is with these two loves.

1. On the one hand, the negation holds firm, the proposition being inverted, if any man love the Father, the love of the world is not in him. Moses' rod swallowed up the magicians'; so doth the love of God all other loves. It is observed of the sunbeams, that if they shine bright and hot upon the fire, they put it out; so do heavenly affections extinguish earthly:

Postquam Amarillis nos tenuit, Galatea reliquit;

When divine love enters in, carnal goeth out. The command of love to God is of a large extent: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with

all thy soul, and with all thy might;' and if the love of God take up the whole, there is not so much as a corner left for worldly love. St Bernard, commenting upon that precept,\* thus expounds it, and that aptly to our present purpose: thou shalt love God with all thy heart, soul, might, that is, *dulciter, prudenter, fortiter*, sweetly, wisely, strongly; and where this love is predominant (as that father hath excellently observed), there is no room for worldly lusts. He that loveth God *sweetly* with all his heart, tasteth no sweetness in carnal things, which is the lust of the flesh; he that loveth God *wisely* with all his soul, is not curious or covetous of temporal things, which is the lust of the eyes; he that loveth God *strongly*, so as to endure all things for him, regards not honours, which is the pride of life.

Nor is it less true in the direct than in the inverted notion. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Indeed, one who hath been a lover of the world may be won to be a lover of God; yea, he who loveth the world in the second, may love God in the first place. But, as St Gregory hath pithily and aptly expressed it,† *Utraque simul et equaliter amari non possunt*, both cannot together be equally loved. When the inferior sensitive powers of the soul are vehemently affected, the superior rational faculties are hindered in their operations; so is spiritual love by carnal. The trees which spread in breadth grow not in height; those who extend their love to the things below, ascend not in love to the things above. Pharaoh's lean kine did eat up the fat; so doth the pining love of the world devour the love of God, which is the fat and marrow of the soul. It is very observable that St Paul, describing the wicked conversation of false teachers, Philip. iii. 19, 20, brands them with these three lusts: 'whose belly is their god,' the lust of the flesh; 'who glory in their shame,' or, as some read it, whose glory is their shame, the pride of life; 'who mind earthly things,' the lust of the eyes; to all which he opposeth that one character of himself, and the rest of the teachers, 'but our conversation is in heaven,' thereby intimating that they who give themselves to worldly lusts, are strangers to an heavenly conversation, and consequently to divine affection, by which especially we climb to, and converse with, God in heaven.

To give you yet more fully the sense of this proposition, if you compare it with parallel Scriptures, you shall find it will admit of a double enlargement, to wit, in regard of the predicate and the copula; the thing denied, and the manner of denying it.

1. *The love of the Father is not in him*, nay, the hatred of the Father is in him. So St James his assertion runs: James iv. 4, 'Know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God;' and that

\* *Divinus amor ubi venerit; omnes captivat affectus.—Bern. Serm. xiii. in Cant.*

† *Greg. Mor. lib. xviii. cap. v.*



he might bring the charge home to their consciences, he repeats it, with the change of the abstract into the concrete, 'Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is an enemy of God.' It is true, (as hath been already intimated) he may be a seeming friend, but he is a real enemy, and so much the worse enemy, because a seeming friend.

I know if this question were put to many lovers of the world, Do you hate God? they would say in Haezel's language, 'Am I a dead\* dog, that I should do this thing?' I say my prayers, frequent the church, and think you I hate, nay, do I not love, God? But, O vain man, do not deceive thyself; whosoever is the world's friend, is at least virtually God's enemy, and so far from loving, that he doth in effect hate him; and all his services are no better than a mocking (as much as in him lieth) of the sacred Deity.

2. *The love of the Father is not*, nay, not only is not, but cannot be in him. Our blessed Saviour is express concerning obedience: Mat. vi. 24, 'You cannot serve God and Mammon;' and it is no less true of love, you cannot love God and the world, much less the world and God. The impossibility of the consistency of these two will appear if you consider,

(1.) The nature of love. It is an engrosser, appropriating the heart to the object; love saith to its beloved, I am thine, to wit, wholly, solely, and therefore it cannot be another's. When the stream runs into one channel, then it runs violently; vehement affection admits not of division. It is as possible for a direct line to terminate in two points, or for one member to serve two bodies, as for love intensively at once to mind two objects.

(2.) The contrariety of the objects, God and the world; in the very next verse, they are set one in opposition to the other. The Father is above, the world is below; so that, to use a comparison of an ancient, † the same eyes may as well at the same time behold heaven and earth, as the same affection be carried towards God and the world. God is light, and the world is darkness. *Fieri non potest* (saith Damascene); ‡ it cannot be that divine and worldly love should cohabit, no more than that light and darkness should reside together. Two contrary forms may as soon at once inform one and the same matter, and two contrary intense qualities meet together in the same subject, as the love of the world and the love of the Father dwell in the same heart. If I love another man's enemy, and that as he is his enemy, I must needs be an enemy to him. The worldling loveth the world, not as in subordination to, but competition with; and therefore he can be no other than an enemy to God. So true is this of our apostle, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

That it may yet more plainly appear that there

\* Qu. omit 'dead'?—Ed.

† 12. Abusionum gradus in Cypr.

‡ Damasc. par. lib. i. c. 30.

neither is nor can be any true love of God in the worldling, take notice of these ensuing particulars.

1. Can there be any love of the Father in him who hath no love to his name, especially his word, which God 'hath magnified above all his name'? And yet this is evident in worldly lovers; their lusts, like thorns, choke the good seed of the word, that it can take no root in their hearts; their proud necks will not stoop to put on this sacred yoke; the voluptuous man's ear is deaf to this heavenly charm; and when the spiritual fishers would catch the covetous, he slippeth (with the eel) into the mud of the world, and so renders all their pains useless.

2. Can there be any love of the Father in him who doth not cleave to him with full purpose of heart, and will renounce his religion, rather than suffer persecution? 'If any man draw back, my soul (saith God) shall have no pleasure in him;' and it is as true, his soul hath no pleasure in God. Now, the love of the world causeth men to grow lukewarm, nay, at last quite cold. St Paul observeth it, 2 Tim. iv. 10, as the ground of Demas his apostasy, 'He hath forsaken me' (and with him Christ), 'having embraced' (to wit, with the arms of love) 'this present world.' What made Judas so frozen, so false-hearted to so gracious a master, but the love of money? Had not Moses, instead of loving, despised the pleasures and honours of Pharaoh's court, he had left the people of God. Danger and nakedness, want and penury, reproach and infamy, will quickly affright that man from his Christian profession, in whom 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life' reign.

3. He that hath any true love of the Father will call the Lord's day a delight, loves to converse with God by prayer and other holy ordinances; but the worldly lover either wholly casts off holy duties, holy days, holy things, or else he takes no joy in the performance of them; no time being worse spent, in his esteem, than that which is in God's courts. Worldly men in heavenly duties are like a fish upon the shore; they faint and gasp, and are never well till they return to the muddy waters. 'When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may sell and get gain?' saith the covetous; that we may take our pleasure, saith the voluptuous; that we may pursue our politic designs, saith the ambitious. Nay, it is not seldom seen that every one of these will not stick to fulfil their own lusts, even when they should be employed in God's service.

4. It is impossible that the love of the Father should consist with sacrilege. No man ever looked upon a thief as his friend. To live in any sin, much more in such a sin as reflects upon God, must needs be repugnant to the love of him. Now, worldly love puts men upon the commission of this great wickedness. Every proud man is a sacrilegious thief, robbing God of his glory, which he will not give to another; and it is not seldom seen that covetous and voluptuous men rob God of his revenues. Belshazzar prostitutes the ves-

sels of the temple to the lust of the flesh by quaffing in them. Achan, through the lust of the eyes, alienateth the devoted gold and garment; wicked worldlings will not stick to be not only sellers and buyers *in*, but *of* the temple, 'taking the houses of God into their possession.'

5. Finally, he that setteth up anything in the room of God cannot have a sincere affection towards him. The cursed idolater, as much as in him lieth, dethroneth the divine majesty, which surely cannot consist with amity. And yet it is an undoubted truth, every worldling is an idolater, to wit, in a spiritual sense, bowing down, though not with his knee to an idol, yet with his heart to the world.\* St Paul, speaking of epicures, who are given over to the lust of the flesh, giveth them this brand, 'whose belly is their god;' and consequently their kitchen is their temple, table their altar, and cook their priest. The same apostle, mentioning covetousness, presently addeth, 'which is idolatry.' Indeed, with a covetous man, sculpture is his scripture; bills and bonds are his Bible, the exchange his temple, and gold his god. As he saith to it, Thou art my love, so likewise thou art my hope, my trust; the proper acts of natural worship which are due only to the Deity. He dealeth with it (as the two giants sometimes did with Mars), first he locks it fast, and then worships it. Finally, the proud man worshippeth (though not images, yet) his own imaginations, and sets up himself in God's room, admiring and adoring his own (though but sometime fancied) excellencies; nay, which is yet worse, he so sets himself above, that he sets himself against, God; for so the prophet, accusing Moab of pride and haughtiness, Jer. xlviii. 26, 29, 42, proveth it by this medium, 'Thou hast magnified thyself against God.' In this respect it is inquired and resolved by the schools, † that pride is the greatest of sins; for whereas in other lusts there is directly a conversion to the creature, in this there is a direct aversion from the Creator. By all which it appeareth, how injurious these lusts are to the Father, and therefore incompatible with the love of the Father.

To what hath been already said concerning the express and positive truth of this clause, I must not forget to add, that there is another implicit and consequential truth wrapped up in it, namely, that if any man love the world, the love of the brethren is not in him. Indeed, the sense of these words, 'the love of the Father,' may be rendered, the love which the Father requireth, and so it extends to brotherly love. Besides, the connection seemeth to intimate, that loving the world is forbidden as an enemy to brotherly love, which is discussed a little before. Finally, *Omne majus continet in se minus*, the less is involved in the greater; so that, as Estius well notes, ‡ since the love of the Father (which is the greater), the love of the

brethren (which is the less) is also to be denied of him who loves the world. St Paul, speaking of charity, saith, 'she seeks not her own,' whereas the worldling is altogether for himself, and therefore hath no affection to others; though, to speak truth, as he is *nemini bonus*, good to no man, so he is *sibi nequam*, worse to himself.

To enlarge upon this a little, consider the worldly lover in reference to his superiors, inferiors, equals, and you shall find he hath no love to any.

1. He is so far from loving that he envieth those that are above him, in place, in wealth, in power.\* To use the phrase of the text, the love of the Father is not in him; not of the political father, against whom he will not stick to rebel when opportunity is offered. The proud man grudgeth subjection, the covetous man tribute, and the epicure obedience to his laws. Not of the ecclesiastical father, whom worldly lusts prompt him to undervalue; yea, if he reprove him, to spurn against; nay, oftentimes, not of the natural father; whilst they who are tainted with these lusts, like Esau, wish the days of mourning for their father were at hand; nay, some, like Absalom, consult their fathers' ruin, that they might enjoy their honours and estates.

2. As for those who are under him, he is very apt to trample them under his feet; and if they be in want, very backward to reach forth an hand of succour to them. The voluptuous layeth out so much upon his pleasures; the ambitious wants so much for the maintaining of his honours; and the covetous layeth up so much for the satisfying of his eyes, that they have little or nothing to spare for the needy; nay, that too often they oppress and grind the faces of the poor.

3. Instead of loving his equal, he is apt to contend and quarrel with them. 'Whence come wars and fighting among you?' saith St James, chap. iv. 1; and answering his question, he addeth, 'Come they not hence, even of the lusts that war in your members?' *Omnia perfectè in pace consistenter, si hominem imperandi cupiditas non teneret*, said Valerius truly. † It is the desire of being above others that hindereth us from living in peace with others; and speaking of covetousness, he asserts, *Hinc pullulare odiorum causas, et amicitiarum fœdera dissipari*, it to be the breaker of amity and begetter of enmity amongst men. Nor is it less true of sensual lusts, which very often blow the fire of discord into a flame.

In one word, what wrong will not men do to their neighbours, in their relations, names, estates, by fraud and treachery, by violence and cruelty, in words and works, for the base love of wealth, or honour, or pleasure, all which are directly repugnant to brotherly love?

To close up with some useful inferences from the consideration of what hath been handled, learn we,

1. How desperate and dangerous a sin is worldly

\* Vide Cypr. de martyri.

† Aquin. 2a. 2æ. l. d.

‡ Est. in loc.

\* Sixt. pap. l. de divitibus.

† Valer. hom. 20. de Avaritia.



love. One upon this clause hath well observed,\* *Lenis oratio, sed plena aculeo*, it is seemingly a gentle speech, but carrieth a sting with it. For in saying there is no love of the Father, and consequently not of his brother, in him that loveth the world, he saith in effect, he is one that breaketh all the commandments; for if love be the fulfilling of the law, to wit, love to God of the first, and love to our neighbour of the second, he that neither loveth God nor men must needs break both. It is very observable that David, praying God to 'incline his heart to his testimonies,' presently addeth, and not to covetousness; thereby implying that if he were inclined to covetousness, he could not love or keep God's testimonies. Moses brake the tables in pieces out of a zealous anger at the golden calf; and the worldling will break the laws written on those tables for the gold upon the calf. The love of money, ay, and of honour and pleasure, is the rot of all goodness, and the root of all wickedness, the moth of sanctity, the rust of virtue, the breeder and the feeder of vice. Ungodliness and worldly lusts are coupled together by St Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 10, Titus ii. 11. 'Abstain from fleshly lusts,' and 'having our conversation honest,' are joined together by St Peter, 1 Peter ii. 11. There is neither honesty nor piety to be found where worldly love reigneth.†

2. How great is the folly of hypocrites, who think to join what here St John hath opposed, the love of the world and the love of the Father together. Many there are (saith Isidore Hispalensis truly) who will fly to heaven by a divine conversation, but yet they are loath to leave earthly contentments: *Provocat eos amor Christi, sed revocat amor seculi*, the love of Christ puts them a little forward, but the love of the world pulls them backward; and so (as Erasmus is painted by the Romans) they hang between heaven and earth. There is a city in Germany, which, belonging to two governments, was called Mindin, which is (according to the signification of it in the German language) mine and thine.‡ Thus the hypocrite saith to God, Thou art mine, and to the world, I am thine; in which respect he is called a double-minded man, and is said to have an heart and an heart, like the Samaritans who feared the Lord and served idols; the Israelites, who halted between God and Baal, 1 Kings xvii. 32, xviii. 11; those in the prophet Zephaniah, who did 'swear by the Lord and Malchom,' Zeph. i. 5, and those lukewarm Laodiceans, who were neither hot nor cold. But, alas, how vainly do such men deceive themselves! Indeed, the false mother of the child would have it parted between them, but the true mother would have all or none. The world is content to have a corner in thy heart, but God will have thy whole heart. The ark and Dagon cannot stand together in one temple, and therefore when the ark is brought in, Dagon falls down: no more can God and the world in one soul;

\* Lor. in loc.

† Munst. Cosmog.

‡ Bern in Ps. *Qui habit.*

and therefore, if we will set up God in the throne, the world must be cast down, nay, out.\* The spouse in the Canticles is said to wound Christ with one eye, *Quia alterum non habebat*, because she had no other. Christ calls upon us in the gospel to cut off one foot, one hand, and to pluck out one eye. The heart in all languages is a monosyllable, *unum uni*, the one heart must be dedicated to the one God. In the meat-offering God required all the frankincense, and in the sacrifices all the fat; to teach us that the intention of our mind and affection of our heart must be wholly carried towards God. Among the Pythagoreans the dual number was infamous. Sure I am, the double-minded man is odious to God; so odious that he threateneth *διχοτομῆν* to 'cut him asunder,' a punishment very suitable to his fault; like that which the king of the Albines inflicted on the king of the Romans, when he caused him to be tied to two horses, who, by drawing contrary ways, tore his body in two pieces.

3. Lastly, how just and necessary it is to cast the love of the world out of the heart, in order to the entertaining of the love of the Father. Indeed, as St Gregory and Leo have both well observed,‡ the reasonable soul cannot be altogether without delight and void of love. *Aut infimis delectatur, aut summis*, so the one; *Aut Dei amator est, aut mundi*, so the other. Our delight must either ascend or descend, our love must either be set upon God or the world. How impossible it is for these two to dwell together, you have already heard; so that either we must 'hate the one and love the other, or hold to the one and despise the other,' as our Saviour tells us. And now, as Elijah said to the Israelites, 'If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal be God, follow him': so let me beseech you, if the Lord be God, love him; if the world, love it. If the world have as much excellency in it as God hath, if the world have as much right to you as God hath, if the world can do as much for you as God can and will, then love it. Bnt, alas, whatever good is in the world, is but a ray of that sun, a drop of that fountain, derived from, and infinitely inferior to, the goodness of God; in which respect St Austin excellently,‡ *Pulcher est mundus, sed pulchrior à quo factus est mundus*, the world is beautiful; surely, then, he that made it so is far more beautiful. Besides, the world was made for us, and therefore only to be used, whereas God is our Creator, Master, Father, and therefore to be feared, and honoured, and loved. Methinketh the Father saith to us concerning the world, as Saul to his servants concerning David, 1 Sam. xxii. 7, 'Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards?' Will or can the world do that for you which

\* Si vis esse templum veritatis, fugo idolum falsitatis, &c. — *Aug. Serm. 14, in festo sanct.*

† Greg. Mor. lib. xviii. cap. viii. Leo, Serm. li. septimi mensis.

‡ Aug in loc.

I will do, give you grace and glory, felicity and immortality? Nay, let me add a word more, the world would infect and infest us instead of doing us good, bring us into temptations and snares; and tell me, then, whether the Father be not to be preferred in our estimation and affection before the world? In fine, that God should have our love we cannot but acknowledge most reasonable; and therefore what remaineth but that every one of us take up firm resolutions of rejecting the world. Love both we cannot; one we will; God we ought; and to that end we must leave the world, that we may cleave to God.

No doubt the world is and will be a very earnest and importunate suitor to us for our love, and too often she so far prevaileth that we consent; but remember, I beseech you, our Father forbids the banns, and shall we match against our Father's consent? Nay, let me tell you, if we marry the world, the Father will disclaim and disown us as none of his children; and therefore, if we

call on the Father, let us renounce the world. Believe it, an ill match is better broken than carried on; and so much the rather, because whatever promise we make to the world, it is a breach of the first vow we made to God in our baptism, and therefore to be disannulled, as inconsistent with our former obligation.

To end all, I cannot better press this than in St Austin's language, who calls these words *verba extirpantia*, words of extirpation. If you find a weed, you grub it up that you may sow good corn; so must we pluck up worldly that we plant heavenly loves. *Vas es* (saith that father\*) *si plenum, effunde quod habes, effunde amorem sæculi, ut implearis amore Dei*. Thy soul is a vessel; if it be full (as indeed whose is not?), empty it, pour out the love of the world, that thou mayest be filled with the love of God, which otherwise is impossible. For 'if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

\* Aug. l. d.

#### SERMON XLIV.

*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.*—1 JOHN II. 16, 17.

**A** NAKED command from God is a sufficient ground of obedience from man. No doubt St Paul so accounted it, and therefore, exhorting the Thessalonians to abstain from fornication, useth this as a strong inducement, 'for this is the will of God.' The truth is, obedience is most ingenious when least discreet, it being very reasonable that we should obey God without asking a reason of his precept. It was the praise of Cæsar's soldiers, *quod imperium potius quam consilium sequebantur*, that they executed their general's injunctions without inquiring into his consultations. It is the character of a good Christian to believe because God asserteth, and obey because he requireth, 1 Thess. iv. 3.

But see the condescension of our merciful God, who is pleased not only to command by his authority, but teach by his grace. So St Paul saith, Tit. ii. 10, 'The grace of God teacheth us to deny worldly lusts,' not only to require, but to entreat; so St Peter, 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you, abstain from fleshly lusts'; finally, not only to prescribe but persuade, and therefore, as he enjoineth a duty, so he adjoineth a motive, and that drawn from the necessity, equity, and utility of observing the command, whether it be to avoid or do.

This is evident in the prohibition here given by St John concerning worldly love, which he contents not himself barely to propound, but strongly presseth as necessary, because else we cannot love the Father, and as just, because this world is of a short continu-

ance: 'For all that is in the world,' &c.; 'and the world passeth away,' &c.

In handling the argumentation, we have despatched the main of the first reason, to wit, the principal confirmation which is drawn from the impossibility of the love of the Father with the love of the world; and now, because this may seem a very strange assertion, our apostle doth not only assert but prove it in the close of the 16th verse, which I am in order to discuss, and it is that which I call

The collateral confirmation, as it is set down in those words, 'is not of the Father, but is of the world;' for the fuller handling whereof I shall consider it both absolutely and relatively.

1. If we look upon this clause absolutely, we shall find the design of it to discover the principle and original of the *all that is in the world*, and that both negatively and affirmatively.

(1.) Negatively. The *all in the world* is not of the Father. Indeed, if we understand this *all* of those things which are the objects of our lusts, this negation must have a limitation.

[1.] Pleasures, riches, honours, must be considered either in themselves and their own nature, or as they allure through their external beauty to inordinate lust, in which latter respect they are not of God, since they were never made by him for that end, to be, as it were, the bawds of lust.

[2.] Either as lawfully or unlawfully acquired. In the latter notion they are not of the Father, except



that it is by his permission they are enjoyed, which is no less true of all wickedness that is acted; in the former they are blessings of God, yet of his left not his right hand; and so are *dona Dei*, the gifts of God, but not *Patris*, of the Father. There are some things which God giveth as a Father in special love only to his children; such are grace and glory. There are other things which he giveth as a God, out of common bounty, to enemies as well as children; and such are food and raiment, wealth and preferment, in which respect (at best) in a strict sense they are not of the Father.

But I rather conceive that this negative is to be understood of the lusts after these things, to which agreeth that of St Austin,\* We know that the apostle did not mean this world, the heavens and the earth, with the things in them, when he saith, All that is in the world is not of the Father. Indeed, the poison is not in the flower, but in the spider which sucketh it; nor are the things themselves, but the lusts after them, evil, and consequently not of the Father; nor yet is all lust after these things to be denied to be of the Father. There is implanted in every living creature an appetite after those things which are suitable to its nature. Now, the nature of man being partly angelical and partly bestial, spiritual in its upper and sensual in its lower faculties, there could not but be in man as created *inclinatio ad sensibilia*, an inclination to sensible objects. But withal, this lust was such as was neither in itself evil, nor did of itself incline to evil.

I know I am here fallen upon a controversy, whilst it is affirmed by the Romanists† with others, that man in *puris naturalibus*, in his pure naturals, had *ex necessitate materiæ conditione*, from the condition of his matter, such a concupiscence which rendered him prone to evil, and did need *supernaturali quodam freno*, a golden bridle of supernatural grace to restrain it; it being here urged upon them that this concupiscence being natural, is of God, and if it need a bridle, it is apt to be irregular and exorbitant, which exorbitancy must needs reflect on God himself, who made man of such a temper. Their only evasion is, that it is from the condition of the matter, *preter intentionem divinam*, besides the intention of the Maker, by which means, whilst they endeavour to vindicate God's purity, they calumniate his wisdom, it being no other than the voice of folly to say, *non putaram*, I did not think of or intend such an event.

I cannot, therefore, but look upon it as most safe to assert with the orthodox, that man's natural concupiscence was not apt to be irregular, *nec frenum nec calcar desiderabatur*. There was no such tardity in the sensitive part as should need a spur, nor yet any such impetuosity as should require a bridle.

For the clearing whereof know, that the sensitive appetite of man being born *sub regno*, under the

dominion, was to be governed *sepectro rationis*, by the command of reason; so that whereas it is natural in a brute to be carried towards sensual objects *juxta impetum*, in a way of violence, it is natural to man to bend towards them *juxta imperium*, according to the dictate of reason. Upon this account, even by the philosopher,\* sensuality in man is asserted to be *κατηκόος λόγου και πειθαρχικός*, reason's servant; and accordingly Damascene is express,† *τὸ λογικὸν φύσει κατάρχει τοῦ ἀλόγου*, the rational part doth naturally rule the irrational; so that though in man there be a necessary desire of things sensible, yet it is (as Aquinas‡ well) *secundum modum et ordinem rationis*, in that measure and order which reason prescribeth, the sensitive powers being not factious or rebellious, but steadily subject to the higher powers, that is, the intellects.

The proneness, therefore, of the sensitive appetite to extravagancy is not natural, but contra-natural; not from the creation, but by transgression. And of those lusts which the vitiated concupiscence in fallen man doth send forth, is it here affirmed, that they are not of the Father.

Indeed, that any sinful lust should be of the Father, is inconsistent with the, 1. Purity of his nature, which cannot endure, must less effect§ the least sin. 2. Verity of his word, which prohibiteth and threateneth all sin; and either those threats are not the declarations of his real intention (which is blasphemy to imagine), or he cannot be the author of any wicked inclinations. 3. Equity of his punishments, it being (as Fulgentius excellently||) most unjust for God not to clear the guilty if he made them so. And, therefore, for the preventing objections, and further evidencing of this truth, be pleased to know,

1. It is one thing to make use of men's lusts, and another to stir up those lusts in men. It pleased God to accomplish his own ends by Pharaoh's proud lust in punishing Israel, and Judas his covetous lust in betraying Christ, but he was no way the cause of these lusts. Thus whilst the holiness of the Father abhorreth evil, the wisdom of the Father draweth good out of it.

2. It is one thing *extrà elicere quod intus latitat*, to draw forth that lust which is in the heart by proposing objects, and another, *præis suggestionibus sollicitare*, to instil evil lusts into the heart by seducing suggestions. It cannot be denied, but that God's providence is pleased (according to that expression in the prophet Jeremiah) to lay stumbling-blocks before men, that is, such objects as prove stumbling-blocks; yea, that God doth purposely present such things, to try, but not to seduce them. Nor is God therefore any more

\* Aristot. Eth. lib. i. cap. xiii.

† Damasc. de orthod. fide. lib. ii. cap. xii.

‡ Aquin. part 3ia. 9, 15, art. 3.

§ Qu. 'affect' ?—Ed.

|| Justitia ea non est si puniendum reum non invenisse sed fecisse deus dicatur.—Fulgen.

\* Aug. adv. Jul. lib. iv. cap. xiii.

† Vide Bellarm. de Amiss. Gratia, lib. v. cap. xiv.

guilty of these lusts which those objects kindle, than a master is of his servant's theft, when he layeth a bag of money in his way, to make trial of his honesty. That expression in the psalmist concerning God in reference to the Egyptians (I confess), is very harsh; where it is said, Ps. cv. 25, 'He turned their heart to hate his people, and to deal subtilly with his servants.' But if you observe the story, and look upon the preceding verse, you shall find it was only by increasing his people, and making them stronger than their enemies, ver. 24, God doth good to the Israelites; and this becometh accidentally an occasion of envy in the Egyptians: in which respect only it is true, 'He turned their hearts to hate them.'

3. It is one thing for God to give leave to men whereby they have opportunity of, and another to incite them to the fulfilling of their lusts. When we read concerning David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, that 'the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David to number the people,' either (comparing it with the parallel place in the Chronicles, 1 Chron. xxi. 1) we must expound that *he* to be Satan, or else we must construe that *he moved* to be no more but he permitted Satan to move David to that proud lust. Thus, when it is said by David of Shimei, 'The Lord hath bid him curse me,' *jussit* is no more but *concessit*, he hath bid, that is, he hath given him leave; and that expression, 'Go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets,' is not to be understood as a commission, but a permission; as granting a warrant, but only giving him leave to seduce the prophets, and by them Ahab. And though the not restraining sin when it is in man's power, involve him in the guilt, because he is bound to hinder all sin to his utmost, yet this can no way be charged upon God, who is no way obliged to bridle men's lusts, and yet withal never suffereth them to break forth, but when he hath designed to make them serviceable for some glorious ends.

4. Once more, it is one thing to give up men to their own lusts, and another to infuse lust into them. The former is a judicial act, which God doth only by withdrawing or withholding from impenitent sinners that grace which they have abused or refused. Thus, when those Israelites would not hearken to God's voice, and would have none of him, Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12, 'he gave them up to their own heart's lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' And when those heathens, 'knowing God, glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts,' Rom. i. 21, 24, 26, it being most just with God to let loose the reins to those sinners who will not be bridled, whereby their lusts hurry them to destruction. But still notwithstanding his objective proposals and wise disposals, permissive concession and penal tradition, these lusts are not of the Father; he is not an instiller or inciter of, nor an inducer, or rather seducer to them.

I end this with that caution of St James, 'Let no man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God,' James i. 13. It is useless to cast the blame of our lusts upon others, but blasphemous to cast it upon God. It is a great sin to arrogate the good we do to ourselves, but a far greater to attribute the evil we do to God. Indeed, it is such a sin (according to St Basil's\* observation) as borders upon atheism; all the difference between them consists in this: the atheist saith, God is not, and the blasphemer saith, God is not good; which latter Plutarch asserts to be worse than the former. Making the case his own, I had rather (saith he†) one should say there never was such a man as Plutarch, than that he was a bad man; and I account it worse to affirm that God is the author of vice, than to deny that there is a God. Oh, then, take we heed how we tread in the steps of our great grandfather Adam, who, to excuse himself, translateth the crime, though not explicitly, yet implicitly, upon God, when he saith, 'The woman which thou gavest me, gave to me, and I did eat.' We cannot do a greater dishonour to God than to spit, nay, cast dirt upon the face of his purity, by charging him with the least iniquity. And now, if you please to know whence these lusts have their original, pass we on to the other clause, wherein it is expressed,

2. Affirmatively, 'But is of the world.' The conceptions of interpreters are somewhat various about this clause, yet all such as are most true, and seem to discover the spring of these lusts.

1. *Of the world*; that is, saith Justinian,‡ *ex pravâ illâ affectione et vitio hominum naturæ indito ob primæ parentis lapsum*, from the corrupt and vicious inclination which is in man's nature, through Adam's fall. All these evil lusts are the ebullitions of our natural corruption, which renders us both backward to whatsoever is good, and forward to all evil; according to that of St James, 'Every man when he is tempted, is drawn aside, and enticed of his own lust,' James i. 13. Were it not for this, all external temptations would (as balls thrown against a stone wall) make no impression, or as sparks cast into the sea, be presently extinguished; it is our inbred vitiosity which maketh us like tinder, ready to catch fire at every spark. But though this interpretation best agree with the thing, yet it is somewhat alien from the phrase, there being no parallel place in which by *world* is understood original contagion.

2. *Of the world*; that is, saith Œcumenius,§ of the god of this world; not of the Father of believers, but the father of the wicked, that is, the devil. These lusts are they, *αὐτὸς ὁ διάβολος πορεύς τε καὶ φυτεύωνος*, whereof Satan is the sower and the planter. He it was who, under the shape of a serpent, enticed our first parents. No wonder if he seduce us to these lusts. Indeed, the pride of life only is his lust *subjectivè*, since

\* Bas. M. hom. quod Deus non est autor mali.

† Plut. Mor.

‡ Justin. in loc.

§ Œcumen. in loc.



he, being a spirit, is not capable of the other two; but all these lusts are his *effectivè*, because he is a suggester of, and enticer to them; his temptations are the bellows which blow the fire of original lust to a flame. But this interpretation is also incongruous to the phrase, and therefore I pass it by.

3. Be pleased, then, to remember what I have already told you, that *world* may be either understood of persons or things; and accordingly both constructions may here not unfitly be used.

(1.) *Of the world*; that is, saith St Austin,\* *Ab hominibus mundi dilectoribus*, of those men who are the world's darlings; and thus these lusts are said to be of the world, as a pattern or exemplary cause, inasmuch as to walk in them is, according to the apostle's phrase, to 'walk according to the course of the world.' The truth is, we are very apt to learn of, and conform to, the corrupt lusts and practices of the world. We do not, with the Pelagians (far be it from us), say, that sin came in only by imitation; but yet withal it is an undeniable truth, that imitation is a cause of much sin; that corrupt nature which is within us rendering us prone to follow others in their evil ways. This is that which those dehortations, both of St Paul and St Peter, plainly intimate. 'This I say and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk;' so St Paul, Eph. iv. 17. 'For the time past of our lives may it suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles;' so St Peter, 1 Peter iv. 7. Both imply, that we are very ready to walk in the way, do the will, of the wicked among whom we live.

(2.) But that interpretation which I look upon as most genuine is, by the *world* to understand the things of the world; and therefore these lusts are said to be of the world, because, by reason of our inbred corruption, these worldly things become occasions and inciters of lust. To this purpose it is that St Paul calls these lusts 'worldly lusts,' Titus ii. 10, not only because they are conversant about the world, but because the world is in some sense a cause, that is, an external moving cause of them. The father of these lusts is the devil, their mother the flesh; the world is a midwife to bring forth, and a nurse to bring up these monstrous brats. No wonder if, upon this account, it is reckoned as one of the three grand enemies of man's salvation.

Learn we, then, that excellent admonition of St James, to 'keep ourselves unspotted of the world,' James i. 27. The truth is, *mundus immundus*, the world is unclean and filthy, and if we take not heed, it will defile and besmear us; if we be not very careful where we tread, we shall soon step into a dirty puddle; if we be not very wary where we walk, we shall quickly be caught in a snare. Oh how hard is it to look upon these things, and not long after them; to use them and not love them; to have them in our eye or hand, and yet keep them out of our heart!

\* Aug. in loc.

Oh, therefore, 'watch and be sober,' so often as you are engaged about worldly things; keep a godly jealousy over your hearts, lest they go out too much after them; for the world is very insinuating, and too often creepeth into our hearts, the presence-chamber of the King of glory, in which respects these lusts are most truly said to be of the world. And so much for the two branches of this clause absolutely considered.

2. Pass we on now to a relative view, and thus it may have a double reference.

1. Some conceive it as an argument why we should not love the world, and the things of it; and truly, whether we understand the subject of this proposition, 'All that is in the world is not of the Father, but is of the world,' of the things themselves, or the lust after them, it will hold good.

1. Love not the things of the world, because these things are not of the Father, but of the world. *Qualia sunt hæc*, saith Zanchy aptly,\* how low poor things are these, how unworthy of a Christian's love! These are from an earthly extraction, an inferior principle. 'Set your affections' (saith St Paul) 'on the things that are above, and not on the things that are upon the earth,' Col. iii. 2. If you will love, let it be those things above that are of the Father, of a noble divine original, not these earthly things which are of the world.

2. Love not the things of the world, because those lusts which are conversant about those things 'are not of the Father, but of the world,' the strength of which argument will better appear if we consider who they are, namely, believers, such as are not of the world, but of the Father, to whom this dehortation is given, it being very unreasonable that they who are not of the world, but of the Father, should harbour those lusts which are not of the Father, but of the world.† When, therefore, O Christian, any desires arise in thine heart, put these two questions to them, Whither tend they? and, especially, Whence are they? If they be of the Father, and so consequently tending upwards, embrace them; but if of the world, and so necessarily bending downwards, refuse them.

But though I do not reject these interpretations, yet I rather adhere to that exposition which looketh upon this clause as a reason of the reason preceding, why the love of the world and the love of the Father are inconsistent; and the strength of the argument may be drawn out two ways.

1. These worldly lusts are not of the Father, and therefore not to the Father. Things move in a circle; where they begin, there they end. Rivers come from, and return to, the sea. These lusts being not of the Father, cannot be *toward* him, nay, indeed, are *against* him, and therefore cannot consist with the love of him. The love of the Father carrieth the heart to-

\* Zanch. in loc.

† Dan in loc.

wards him; these lusts being not of the Father, turn away the heart from him, how can they agree together?

2. Where there is a love of the Father, only that which is of the Father will find acceptance; yea, whatever is not of the Father, the soul that loveth him cannot choose but abhor. He that loveth God truly hath a sympathy and antipathy correspondent to his; what God loveth he loveth, what God hateth he hateth; and, therefore, since these lusts are so far from being of the Father, that they are of the world,—yea, the Father, instead of an author or abettor of them, is an abhorrer and an opposer of them,—no wonder if there be no sincere love of the Father where the love of the world is predominant.

And this shall suffice to have been spoken of the first branch of the argumentation drawn from the love of the world, its repugnancy to the love of God. It now remaineth that we proceed to

The other branch, which is taken from the world itself, its short continuance, as it is set down in the seventeenth verse, 'For the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof: but he that doth the will of God endureth for ever;' where there are two general parts occur to our observation, to wit,

A thesis or proposition, 'For the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof;'

An antithesis, or opposition, added by way of amplification, 'but he that doth the will of God endureth for ever.'

1. Begin we with the proposition, into which if you please to look narrowly, you shall find these three assertions:

1. The world passeth away;
2. The lust after the world passeth away;
3. The worldly lover passeth away.

Of each in order.

1. *The world passeth away.* In several passages of Scripture we find a division of worlds, into that which now is, and that which is to come. As for that which is to come, the author to the Hebrews plainly intimateth, that it is 'a continuing city,' where he saith, 'We have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' Of this present world, therefore, is this assertion to be understood.

And thus, if we take this world, *φυσικῶς*, in its largest and most comprehensive notion, for the whole fabric of the visible heavens and the earth, it is true, the world passeth away; yea, as Grotius noteth upon the text,\* *Eā lege factus, ut aliquando pereat*, it was created corruptible, and is as sure to perish as that it once began to flourish. This is affirmed by the psalmist: Ps. ciii. 25, 26, 'Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.' By our Saviour himself: Mat. xxiv. 35, 'Heaven and

\* Grot. in loc.

earth shall pass away;' and by St Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10, both the things and the means of accomplishing it are indicated. 'The heaven and the earth that now is, are reserved to fire;' and yet more fully, 'The day of the Lord shall come as a thief: in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.' This witch (for so she is indeed to the greatest part of men) shall be burned up with all her baggage. This world (to use Isidore Pelusiotas's comparison\*), *μεθέξει*, reeleth to and fro like a drunken man, till at last it fall down. So true is that of St Cyprian,† *Hęc sententiā mundo data, ut omnia orta occidunt*, this doom is inevitably passed upon the world, that as it had a beginning, so it shall have an end.

I am not ignorant that there is some contrariety among divines about the nature of this passing away, whether it shall be substantial or accidental.

Some, ‡ expounding this of St John, *the world*, by that of St Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 31, '*the fashion of this world passeth away*,' affirm the passing away to be only accidental; and to this purpose St Gregory is express, § *Utraque hæc* (speaking of the heavens and the earth) *per eam quam nunc habent imaginem trans-eunt; sed tamen per essentiam sine fine subsistunt*: Both these pass away as to their present shape, but in their essence they shall endure for ever.

Others conceive, that since at the last day the wicked shall be banished into everlasting flames, and the godly received into the kingdom prepared for them, this present world will be useless, as an house wherein there is no inhabitant; it shall be pulled down, and the very materials of it annihilated.

But after all debates upon this question, it will be a presumption to determine it, because the Scripture is silent. I could wish, as this, so many other disputes of the like nature were either wholly silenced, or more calmly discussed. Why should we contend one with another about the manner, so long as we believe the thing?

But that to which I rather incline, is to understand the world, *ῥηθικῶς*, in a moral notion, for those things of the world which are the objects and allurements of these lusts, it being most rational to take the world in the motive, in the same sense in which it is understood in the dehortation; so that the plain scope of our apostle in this clause, is to assert that all these things of the world, with which the children of men are so apt to be in love, are of a fading, transitory nature.

Indeed, the Greek word here used, *παράγεται*, admits of several acceptations, each of which may very well be admitted in this place.

1. If we look to the derivation of the word (from *παρά* and *ἄγω*), it is most properly rendered *transversum*

\* Isid. Pelus. lib. ii. ep. vi. 26.

‡ Ambrose.

† Cypr. ep. ad Demetr. § Gr. M. Job lib. xvii cap. v.



*agit*, the world carrieth its lovers headlong, contrary to the dictates of God's word and right reason. We are all travellers, the world is an horse, which, whilst a man rideth with the bridle of moderation, it serveth to carry him on his journey; but when, through too much love, he layeth as it were the reins upon its neck, it carrieth him into cross ways, over hedge and ditch, till at last it throweth, yea, overthroweth him. We are all sailors; this world is as the sea, and our affections as the winds, which being set upon the world, like a contrary blast, drive the ship of the soul upon rocks and sands, till it split and sink into ruin. Suitable to which is that of St Austin, *Ama saeculum, et absorbet te, amatores suos novit vorare, non portare*, Love the world and it will drown thee, it knoweth how to swallow, not to bear its lovers.

2. The Greek word among profane authors\* is used to signify as much as to *deceive* or *seduce by fair promises*; and in this sense it is true of the world, which by its specious shews and subtle insinuations, deceiveth the fond lover. The world pretends to be a kind nurse to her children, but if you draw her two dugs, instead of milk, you shall find nothing but the water of vanity in the one, and the wind of vexation in the other. No wonder if St Jerome compare it to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, into which whosoever looketh, will find only an empty hollowness; and St Gregory, to a rotten nut, which, how fair soever it seemeth, if you open it with the knife of truth, you shall find it only full of worms. One being invited to a covetous man's house, who had a stately gate and an empty hall, wondered that there should be so much without and so little within; a fit emblem of these worldly things which promise much, and perform little. Very fitly, saith Seneca (alluding to the stage), *omnium personata est felicitas*, all the comforts of these worldly enjoyments is only personated, not real. They seem to be what they are not, and to do what they cannot. In one word, the world is the greatest bankrupt, and at best doth but compound with its lovers, not satisfying the half of what it promiseth.

3. But the most usual signification of the word, especially in sacred writ, is to *pass away*: that it is so to be taken here, appeareth in that it is opposed to *abiding* in the next clause; and therefore in this notion I shall now handle it.

1. It is that which is true of these things, considered absolutely in themselves; they are of a fading nature: according to that of St Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'The things that are seen are temporal.' Indeed, as Gregory Nyssen† well observeth, *πάν ματάιον ἀνώπαρκτον*, that which is of slender substance must needs be of short duranee; in vain is perpetuity expected from vanity; and this *all*, according to Solomon's assertion, Eccles. i. 2, is 'vanity,' yea, 'vanity of vanities,' where the Hebrew word signifieth a breath, yea, the breath of an infant, which is scarcely perceivable. It is very

\* Thucyd.

† Greg. Nyss. *ibid.*

considerable to this purpose, that the wise man saith of riches, 'they are not;' and our Saviour implicitly asserteth as much of honour, where he saith to the sons of Zebedee, 'Hitherto you have asked me nothing,' when yet they had petitioned, the one to sit at his right hand, and the other at his left hand. Upon which St Austin's\* note is, *Solum bonum spirituale estimari debet aliquid*, only that which is spiritual is real; as for riches, honour, and all worldly things, they are nothing, because of no intrinsecal worth, nor lasting continuance. Heraclitus compareth them, *ποταμοῦ ῥόη*, to the running water, which is still passing, so that we cannot go twice into one and the same water; St Gregory, to those treasures of snow mentioned in Job xxxviii. 20, which, after a great deal of pains in gathering together, melt away. This world is not *quercetum*, a thicket of oaks, which stand long, but *arundinetum*, a place of willows, which soon bend. The garden of Eden (which may well be called the diamond of the world's ring) was situated by the land of Nod, which signifieth unstable, thereby intimating the tottering condition of all worldly excellencies.† It is storied of Edward the First, that, after all his famous victories, he died on the borders of Scotland, at a place called Furbis Sands; where note, saith the historian, upon how sandy a foundation all worldly greatness is built. No wonder if that which hath a weak and infirm foundation do not long continue.

2. Besides, whilst these things in themselves continue, they pass away from their possessors, and change their masters. Nothing more usual than for worldly things to pass like wild fowl, from one man's field, or like the river, from one man's bank, to another. The apostle Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 18, calls them 'uncertain riches' (it is no less true of honours and pleasures), because we have no certain tenure of them. The utmost we can enjoy them, is *durante vita*, during life. When the worldly lover's breath expireth, these things to which he hath cleaved will leave him; but, alas! we are not sure to enjoy them so long. The marriage between the world and its lover is not like that between husband and wife, 'to have and to hold till death part;' no, nor yet is the possession of them certain, *quandiu quis bene se gesserit*, so long as a man useth them well; they pass away from good as well as bad, so that the term of our tenure is only *durante beneplacito*, so long as God pleaseth. And if you look upon the dispensations of divine providence, what frequent changes may you observe it to ring in the steeple of this world, soon turning plenty into scarcity, wealth into want, glory into ignominy, and honour into contempt!

3. Thus do these things pass away, and that (as Zanchy‡ well observeth upon the words) *instar rapidissimi fluminis*, like a swift running river, or as St Austin allegorisseth that in the Psalms,§ 'he shall

\* Aug. tract. in Joh. 102.

† Zanch. in loc.

‡ Cypr. de laude Martyr.

§ Aug. in Ps. cx.

drink of the brook in the way,' a violent and impetuous torrent. We read concerning the tempter, Luke iv. 5, that he 'shewed Christ all the kingdoms and glory of the world in a moment.' Upon which St Ambrose excellently,\* *Non tam conspectus celeritas indicatur, quam caduca fragilitas potestatis exprimitur, not so much the suddenness of the sight, as the transitoriness of the things themselves is thereby intimated, worldly power and honour passing away in a moment.* The wiseman saith of riches, they 'take them wings' (not feet only), and flee away, to wit, speedily, suddenly, before we are aware. Worldly wealth (as St Gregory excellently), *difficile habetur, cito amittitur*, is hardly got, and easily lost, like the cobweb, far longer in the spinning than it is in the sweeping down. The Spanish proverb saith of sickness, it cometh on horseback, and goeth away on foot, but wealth cometh on foot, and goeth away on horseback; creepeth along like a snail, but flieth from us like an eagle. That similitude of the psalmist concerning the grass, Ps. xc. 3, 'Which in the morning groweth up and flourisheth, but in the evening is cut down and withereth,' is a fit emblem of all worldly enjoyments; and the vulgar Latin's reading, which is with a double *transeat*, intimateth that is passing from morning to evening; and in that the condition of these things is so much the more represented, which are continually in motion from first to last; and as St Austin excellently,† *Quò magis celeriter crescunt ut sint, eò magis festinant ut non sint*, the longer they are enjoyed, the nearer they are to decaying. In one word, what St Gregory‡ observeth of secular glory is true of all the rest. *Dum nitet cadit; dum extollitur, repentino interrupta fine terminatur*, whilst it glittereth and shineth gloriously, on a sudden it vanisheth away; like ears of corn, which, the higher they grow, the sooner they hang down their heads. Indeed (to use Gregory Nazianzen's comparison), what is this world, but a show, a scene, a representation, which having pleased our eyes for a few minutes, is presently removed; agreeing with that parallel place of St Paul, 'The fashion of this world passeth away.' And thus I have given you a short view of the world's passing, which is the first branch of the position.

2. The next followeth, which is, that the lust of or after the world, and the things of it, passeth away. Indeed, those who understand the world in the former clause largely, for the whole visible fabric, expound this lust metonymically, for the things of the world lusted after; and so the sense is, that as the whole world in general, so in particular the most desirable and amiable things in the world pass away; not only the *field*, but the *flower of the field* withereth. But I know no reason to recede from the plain meaning of the word, and therefore I shall so discuss it. The lust, the desire after, and delight in worldly things passeth

away. This is that which is true in a double consideration, to wit, whilst we live, and when we die.

1. Whilst men live, their lusts pass away in a double sense,

(1.) They pass away; that is, they are abortive, as having no strength to bring forth. It is the difference between heavenly and earthly, spiritual and carnal desires, those shall certainly be satisfied, but these are frequently disappointed; these for the most part end in a shameful sadness, those in a gladsome success. God many times is pleased to blast the hopes, cross the desires, and evacuate the hopes and endeavours of wicked men in their sinful ways, according to that threat in the Psalms, Ps. cxii. 6, 'The desire of the wicked shall perish.' Hence it is that their desires create a great deal of sorrow and perplexity to them; and who would give way to such lusts, which prove so often successful, and being disappointed, end in grief and impatency?

(2.) They pass away; that is, being fulfilled, they are soon glutted. In this sense, worldly men, like children, are soon weary when they have what they desire. It is an excellent saying of St Austin,\* *Latitia seculi cum magnâ expectatione speratur, ut veniat; praterit, cum venerit*; men are big with hopes of a great deal of content and joy in the accomplishment of their desires, and, alas! delight is no sooner come but it is gone; and to the same purpose Seneca saith of worldly pleasures,† *Fluit et transit, et pene antequam veniat aufertur*, it is of a fluid, transient nature, and is taken away almost as soon as enjoyed. The truth is, many times whilst the things themselves stay with us, our lust to, love of, and delight in them ceaseth. In which respect the world may fitly be compared to the grass, and our lust to the flower of the grass; for as the flower fadeth away before the grass, so our lust passeth away whilst yet the worldly object continueth; yea, oftentimes our longing is turned into loathing, and our love into hatred; witness the story of Amnon and Tamar. That observation of St Gregory is very apt to this purpose, concerning the difference between corporal and spiritual delights: these *cum non habentur, in fastidio; cum habentur, in desiderio*, whilst we want them they are loathed, when we have them they are loved; but those *cum non habentur, in desiderio; cum habentur, in fastidio*, whilst we want them are desired, when we have them they are loathed. Hence it is, that as weak stomachs must have choice of diet, so worldly desires call for change of objects. Why did Solomon study such variety of pleasures, but because they soon satiate, and the wanton appetite is still calling for a new object? Nothing more easy than to surfeit of earthly enjoyments, and for those things which being absent, were our earnest desire, by their continued presence, to become an heavy burden. Oh

\* Ambrose ibid.

‡ Greg. M. lib. xvi.

† Aug. Confess. lib. iv. cap. x.

\* Aug. in Joh., Tract. 7.

† Sen. Consol. ad Polyb. cap. xxvii.



let us learn to abhor these lusts, which will of themselves at last end in abhorring.

2. Once more, whatever enjoyment we may have of, or contentments in, these lusts whilst we live, they shall all cease when we die. When death cometh, the covetous man shall grasp no more wealth, the ambitious shall gape no more after honour, nor the luxurious neigh after his Delilah. As there is no 'wisdom nor counsel,' so there is no desire or delight 'in the grave whither we are going.' These lusts will leave when thou diest, how much better is it for thee to leave them whilst thou livest.

3. There remaineth yet one branch more of the position, and that is, though not expressed, yet implied, concerning the worldly lover himself. For in the other clause, the person who doth God's will is said to abide for ever; and so, by way of analogy, this passing away must be understood, not only of the things and the lust, but the person who lusts after these things.

Indeed, we are all in this world as in a ship, not only the ship itself moves, but the passengers are carried away in it; yea, which is the riddle, the passengers go faster than the ship, since even whilst the world continues the inhabitants pass away. Paulinus desired St Austin to write somewhat *de statu humana vita*,\* of the state of human life; he presently corrects him, telling him he should have said, *de cursu humana vita*, of the course of human life, our life being a swift race to the goal of death. And well were it if we would still join, in our meditations, our own and the world's passing away together. If these things do not leave us, yet we must leave them; and, as Esau said, 'I die, and what good will my birth-right do me?' So let us often think, I must be gone, and what good will my honours, riches, pleasures do me? It is the question and answer of St James, 'What is your life? it is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away,' James iv. 14. Some expositors observe an emphasis in the *your*; you that are so much in love with this life and the things of it, how brittle, frail, and transitory are they and it!

¶ Nor yet is this all that is here implied, since not only that which is common to worldlings with other men is here asserted, to wit, the passing away by death, but such a passing away as is peculiar to him, in opposition to the happy estate of them that love God; and then the meaning is this, he passeth away, not only by a first but a second death, he loseth this life so as never to enjoy another; he so passeth away as to perish, not by annihilation, but by condemnation; he passeth from the world's joys to hell's torments. Oh the dismal change which a worldling maketh when he dieth; all his good things are taken from him, and horror, anxiety, despair, and everlasting misery seize upon him. So true is that of an

\* Aug. Ep. ad Paulin.

ancient, *Amor mundi non solum peritorius sed peremptorius*, worldly love is not only vain, but deadly, killing not only the body but soul of the sinner to all eternity.

To bring this home in a brief application,

1. Oh that every one of us would be convinced of the world's instability. Indeed, in this (as well as in many others) the world is a juggler, that though it be so inconstant yet it promiseth continuance. Fully to this purpose St Gregory,\* The vain joys of this present life, *Quasi manendo blandiuntur, sed amatores suos citò transeundo decipiunt*; flatter us as if they would stay with us, and on a sudden by passing away they cheat us. Look as the sun, moon, and stars (to borrow that similitude of Philo the Jew†), though they move with a most swift and rapid motion, seem to the vulgar eye to stand still, at least move slowly; so do these sublunary things in a worldling's eye. That rich man in the Gospel, Luke xii. 19, 20, who said to himself, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,' is called a fool for so saying. A fool he was in many respects: in that he thought his soul could take any content in his barns; in that he expected to find ease in the things of this world, which are as thorns; in that he supposed those things were only given him to eat, drink, and be merry with; but the worst fool of all, in that he imagined he should enjoy these goods for many years. Such fools were those drunkards who say, Isa. lxx. 12, 'We will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as to-day, and much more abundant;' and those mammonists of whom the psalmist saith, Ps. xlv. 11, 'Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations.' But oh when will we believe that which we so often see and hear, and acknowledge what daily experience confirmeth, that this world's goods are (as they are called) moveables, yea, all these worldly things mutable and inconstant. Alas, my brethren, the time will come when (too late) we shall see their vanity and instability, *Vilia et fluida esse cognoscit amissa* (saith St Gregory‡) *que dum aderant magna et mansura videbantur*. When we are stripped of all, the vain fugacity of these things, which whilst we enjoy are so glorious and permanent in our eyes, will appear. But oh how much better will it be for us, whilst yet they are present with us, to look upon them as parting from us.

To this end pray we for a spiritually enlightened mind. It is the saying of Jamblicus, If a man could behold this world in the light of divine knowledge, he will find it to be a vanishing shadow; and Plato etymologising *φρόνησις*, which signifieth *wisdom*, saith it is *φρασις καιροῦ νόσις*, a due apprehension of the fluid motion of these

\* Greg. M. lib. i. Bern. cap. xii.

† Philo, lib. de confus. liug.

‡ Gr. M. lib. viii. cap. xx.

terrene contentments. Oh let us implore this wisdom from above. That blind man in the Gospel whose eyes Christ opened, saw at first men walking like trees, an argument of the weakness of his natural sight, but in a mystical sense (saith Chrysologus,\*) it argueth the strength of spiritual sight to see all the things of this world, not as pillars but as trees, and those not standing, but walking, in a continual motion. It is very observable with what a different aspect our blessed Saviour looked upon the stones of the temple from the standers by, Luke xxi. 5; they beheld them as 'godly stones,' but Christ saw 'one stone not left upon another.' Thus whilst these worldly objects appear amiable to a carnal eye, the spiritual Christian beholds them as those which in a little time will perish and come to nought.

2. Being thoroughly persuaded of this truth, it will (I trust) make way for that which is the main design of our apostle, namely, to dissuade us from the love of the world, because it passeth away. It was a notable speech of Laconius in Plutarch,† when he was told of a ship richly laden that was come into the port, I am not (saith he) much moved with that prosperity which hangeth upon ropes. Oh then, why are we so much taken with this world, which is so uncertain? *Quid strepis oh munde immunde*, saith St Austin,‡ Oh thou filthy world, what a noise dost thou make; how would men doat upon thee if thou wert lasting, who love thee so well though thou art fading. Alas, beloved, you may as well stop the running stream with your hand, blow back the wind with your breath, or cause the sun to stand still, as hinder the passing away of these worldly things; and why will you hold that fast in affection, which you cannot long in possession? Swallows (they say) will not build their nests in an house which is ready to fall. Which of you, if the carpenter should tell you your house would drop down within few days, would not presently remove from it? Oh let us leave this world before it leave us, and possess it as though we possessed it not, because ere long we shall be dispossessed of it. We sometimes laugh at children that are pleased with paper castles, which may be filliped down in a moment; have we not more reason to weep over ourselves, who 'hold fast deceit,' and set our hearts on those things which are so easily and suddenly snatched away from us. What is pleasure, wealth, honour, but as the sand? So Gregory Nyssen§ aptly; and you know when children have been running up and down in the sand, so soon as they are gone no footsteps remain of all their toil. The truth is, how wise soever worldly lovers may account themselves, they are notorious fools, even upon this account, that they lean upon a broken reed, feed upon the wind, and grasp at a shadow. Let therefore the counsel of devout Anselm||

be acceptable to us, *Nolite constanter mundum diligere, quando ipse quem diligitis non potest constare. Incassum eor quasi manenter fugitis dum fugit ipse quem diligitis*, Why should we so constantly love this world, whenas this world which we love is so inconstant? Let not our foolish heart think to fix itself on that which is still ready to fly away.

Tell me, I beseech you, would any of you weary yourselves in scraping up wealth, in compassing honour, pursuing pleasure, did you certainly know that, before to-morrow, either you should die, or those enjoyments should be taken away from you? Can any of you secure yourselves that it shall not be so? Yea, is there anything more possible than that these things may presently, or more certain than that they shall ere long, pass away? And therefore, since the world passeth away from us, let us, according to Leo's counsel,\* resolutely pass by the world, so as it may be only *viaticum itineris, non illecebra mansionis*, a subservient handmaid, not a domineering mistress.

And now that this argument, which our apostle here useth, may have the stronger influence upon us, to dissuade from worldly love, let me entreat you seriously to ponder upon these four particulars.

1. What a disproportion there is, and that upon this very account, between this world and our souls. It is a rule in marriage, that there should be a fit proportion, as in other things, so in years, between the persons; how unfit then is it for thy soul to be married to this world, whenas the world is transitory, and thy soul is immortal. Canst thou be so sottish as to think that God did breathe that immaterial spirit of thine into thee, to have only the happiness of a muck-worm, which breedeth and feedeth in dung, or at best of an Indian emmet, which glittereth in golden dust about it! Dost thou imagine what that soul of thine which is glued to this world, will do when this world shall be taken from it! Surely, as Philip said to his son, *Par tibi regnum quare*, seek a kingdom suitable to thy greatness; so let me say to thee, Seek an object proportionable to thy soul, and that cannot be the world, for it passeth away.

2. This world, as in itself it is transitory, so it passeth away soonest from them who set their hearts upon it. I have read of certain fitting islands, which seem continually to move in the sea, and if you sail towards them, the nearer you approach to them, the further they remove from you: a fit emblem of these worldly things, which many times are farthest from them who seek most after them. In this respect, what is observable of the shadow, *sequentem fugit, fugientem sequitur*, may be applied to the world; it often followeth him that flieth from it, and flieth from him who followeth it. Very apt to this purpose is that similitude of water, which the faster you think to grasp it in your hands, slideth away the sooner from you. Thus are covetous, ambitious, and volup-

\* Leo, serm. v. de jejun. 7mi. mensis.

\* Chrysol. serm. 176. § Greg. Nysa. hom. in Ecl.

† Plut. Apotheg. || Ans. in Rom.

‡ Aug. serm. xxix. de verbis dom.



tuous men frequently deceived in their expectation of enjoying this world, which they so dearly love. Indeed, it is the usual dispensation of divine providence, to take away from men those comforts which he seeth to steal away their hearts from him. It is high time for the mistress to turn the maid out of doors, when she findeth her husband's affections taken off from her, and set upon the maid. What more just than that God should pluck away those delights from us which alienate our hearts from him; so that, in one word, the way to enjoy a comfort is to be willing to lose it, and the way to lose it is immoderately to love it.

3. This world passeth away from its lovers when they have most need of it. Solomon saith of riches, and it is true of honours and pleasures, they 'profit not in the day of wrath,' and then it is we shall be in greatest want of comfort and support. When Absalom is caught in the thick boughs of a great oak, and is taken up between the heaven and the earth, the mule that was under him went away, 2 Sam. xviii. 9. Absalom's mule is a fit emblem of this world, which then leaveth us when we are in the greatest straits.\* That similitude which Job applieth to his deceitful brethren, Job vi. 19, 20, may no less aptly be used in reference to these worldly things, 'as the streams of brooks they pass away;' for as these vanish away in the heat, so that the thirsty traveller which cometh thither for relief is confounded because he hoped, so do those fail us in the day of distress, and shame sits upon the faces of those who loved and trusted in them.

4. Lastly, the world passeth away with its lust, but the sting remaineth; the pleasure vanisheth, but the torment abideth. All these delights, like the candle, burn for a time, but when they go out, they leave a stink behind them; and oh how miserable is the worldling's condition, who, when these things take

\* Drogo Host. in serm. de dom. pass.

their leave of him, hath nothing left but a despairing remembrance of, and sorrowful regret at his folly, in being bewitched with, and spending so much time upon, these perishing contentments.\* Who would drink of such waters, which though sweet as honey in the mouth, are bitter as gall and wormwood in the belly? When therefore you find these worldly objects alluring your hearts, look upon them not as *venientes sed abeuntes*, coming but going, flourishing but withering, and then I am confident your hearts will be weaned from them. Oh remember at the best they are but fading flowers, at the worst they are pricking thorns, they are chaff, in the hand light, in the eye troubling; never any grasped them with affection, but found woe and vexation.

What therefore now remaineth but that, upon all these urging considerations, we every one at last resolve to bid this world farewell. Say then (O my soul), Hence, you vanishing pleasures, I will no longer repose myself under your shadows. Adieu, you flying riches, I will no longer seek for covert under your wings. Farewell, fading honours, I will no longer gaze upon your beauty; begone, all you gilded follies, your seeming splendour shall no more deceive me; it is now high time for me to look after my soul, and I am sure you cannot make that happy. If I do not now leave you, I know ere long you will leave me; and if I make not provision beforehand, what will then become of me? Henceforth I shall use you as servants, but never more love you as friends. Why should I forsake my own mercies, to observe lying vanities!

‡ And thus I have despatched the proposition of the world's passing away, and hastening to an end. I should proceed to the opposition, but the hour is passed away, and bids me end my discourse for this time.

\* Bern. de fallacia presentis vitæ.

## SERMON XLV.

*And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.—*

1 JOHN II. 17.

IT is a known maxim in morality, *voluntas non fertur nisi in bonum*, the will is not carried towards any object, but under the notion of good; yet it is as true, that the good which the will embraceth, is many times not *verum* but *apparens*, good in the reality of the thing, but only in the opinion of the person, to whose misguided judgment it appeareth of another nature than indeed it is. This is that which is evident in pleasures, riches, honours, about which 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life' are conversant. By their lovers they are esteemed, not only good, but the only good thing, in the fruition of which they place their happiness; and yet, alas, how

miserably do their fond imaginations delude them, since those things (at best) are but in the lowest rank of good; yea, they rather have a show, a shadow, a semblance, than any reality, solidity, or substance of good in them. This it is whereof our apostle endeavoureth to convince the worldling in this verse, and that by an undeniable argument, namely, the short and fading continuance of all these things; whose 'goodness' (to borrow the prophet Hosea's similitudes, Hes. vi. 3), 'is like the morning cloud, and like the early dew it vanisheth away;' for 'the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God,' &c.

Having despatched the position in which the main force of the argument consists, that which now remaineth to be discussed is the opposition annexed by way of amplification, 'But he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever.'

For the better handling of which clause, I shall consider it first in itself, and then in its connection with that which precedeth.

1. That which this clause presents us with, considered by itself, is the permanent felicity of an obedient Christian, and in it are two particulars considerable :

The qualification or duty required implicitly in these words, '*He that doth the will of God.*'

The remuneration or mercy assured in these, '*endureth for ever.*'

1. That which first occurreth to our discussion is the qualification, for the handling whereof two things would be opened :

What will of God is intended ?

What doing of his will is required ?

‡ (1.) In answer to the first, be pleased to know,

[1.] That *will* may be taken two ways ; either for the faculty and act of willing, or for the object or thing which is willed. When St Paul saith, 'God hath predestinated us according to the good pleasure of his will,' it is plainly meant of the faculty and act of willing, which in God is the same with his essence. But in all those places where the Scripture speaketh of doing God's will, it must be referred to the object of his will, and meaneth a doing of the thing which God willeth to be done.

[2.] In respect of the things which God willeth to be done, know further, that his will is secret or revealed. God's secret will is his eternal counsel and purpose, either of permitting or effecting, either immediately or mediately, whatsoever is done in the world. This is that which is called by the schools *voluntas effeata*, that will of God which is always done, according as he saith himself, Isa. xlv. 10, 'My counsel shall stand, I will do all my pleasure.' Indeed, in this notion these two are convertible : whatever God wills is done, and whatsoever is done God wills. If it be evil, he wills to suffer it ; if it be good, he wills, either by himself or his creatures, to effect it. And the reason is plain, because if anything could be done *Deo nolente*, against God's will, it must be either because he did not know of the doing it, and then he were not omniscient, or because he did know, and could not hinder the doing of it, and then he were not omnipotent ; to deny either of which, is to deny him to be a God. According to this construction, the truth is, even wicked men do God's will. Whilst their design is to fulfil their own mischievous lusts, they accomplish God's righteous pleasure ; whilst they intend to oppose the will of God which they know, they effect his hidden counsel. But since (as God saith of the king of Assyria, he 'meaneth not so') it

is against their will that they do God's, yea, their intention is to cross his, even when they do it ; such a doing his will is no virtue, and therefore not the secret, but the revealed, will of God is here intended.

[3.] Be pleased further to take notice, that the things which God revealeth to be his will are of two sorts : either such as are to be done *de nobis*, upon us, or *a nobis*, by us.

1. God's revealed will concerning the things to be done upon us is either *pro* or *contra*, *for* or *against* us, and is manifest either by the predictions of his word, whether promissory or minatory, or by the execution of his works, whether in mercies or judgments ; and this will of God calls for the practice of several graces, according to its various dispensation, both in regard of good and evil.

(1.) The revelation of God's will *for* us is considerable, either as it is in the promise or the performance. As it is in the promise, it is that we are to hope and pray for, to trust in, and rest upon. Thus David, Ps. exix. 67, 'I have hoped in thy word ;' and again, 'Deal bonnhtfully with thy servant, according to thy word,' that is, thy promise, which is a revelation of God's gracious will. As it is in the performance, it is that we are to praise him for, and walk worthy of ; nothing being more equal than that, when it pleaseth God to do us good, we should give him thanks, ascribing what we enjoy, not to the worthiness of our work, but the goodness of his will ; according to that angelical hymn, Luke ii. 10, when the pleasure of the Lord was accomplished in the incarnation of Christ, 'Glory to God on high, good will towards men.'

(2.) The revelation of God's will *against* us is likewise to be considered, either as it is in the threatening, or in the inflicting ; as threatened, it is that we are to fear ; when inflicted, it is that we are to bear. Before we know it to be his determinate pleasure, we may pray against it ; so soon as it appeareth to be his pleasure, we must submit to it. Thus did Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18, when upon that doleful message, iterated by Samuel in his ears, he saith, 'It is the Lord ; let him do what seemeth good in his sight.' Thus did Job, when, being spoiled of all, he saith, 'The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Yea, thus did that divine philosopher, Epictetus, when he said, 'I have submitted my will to God's ; if he will have me burn with a fever, or labour with any misery, I am willing.' Indeed, the name of that deacon to whom St Austin wrote, *Quod-vult-Deus*, ought to be the temper of every Christian, *what God will*, that we may be able to say, in his severest dealings with us, what Harpalus said when he was invited to a feast by Astyages, whereof one dish was the head of his son baked ; and the king asked him how he liked it ? 'What pleaseth the king pleaseth me.' But this is the will of God which we are to suffer with patience and cheerfulness. And therefore,



2. It remaineth that the will of God here intended is his revealed will of those things which are to be done by us ; that will in regard of which we are not to be passive, but active ; to which we owe not patience, but obedience ; a voluntary submission, but ready subjection.\* This is that will of God which is called *voluntas imperans*, or *præceptiva*, God's prescribing or commanding will, because it is revealed in his commands ; and these both affirmative and negative, enjoining what is good, that we may practise it, and inhibiting what is evil, that we may avoid it ; so that, if you will explain one word by another, that which in this and such like scriptures is called the will of God, is the same with that which is called the law of the Lord. And so much in answer to the first question.

(2.) That which cometh next in order to be inquired is, What doing of God's will is required ? In answer to which, take notice,

1. That it is not *ὁ γνώσκων*, but *ὁ ποιεῖν*, he that knoweth, but he that doth the will of God. Indeed, we cannot do God's will (at least not as God's will) till we know it ; in which respect that apostolical counsel is very necessary, 'Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is ;' and to this end we must, according to our Saviour's advice, search the Scriptures, which are the records of his will ; and for this reason, no doubt, David so often prayeth, 'Teach me thy statutes, shew me thy ways, make me to understand the way of thy precepts,' Ps. xxv. 12, xxvii. 11. But still the end of our knowing must be doing, and therefore God bids Moses teach the Israelites his commands that they might do them, Deut. vi. 1 ; and our Saviour tells his disciples, 'If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.' It is St James his caution, 'Be not hearers, but doers of the word, deceiving your own souls.' Sitting Mary and stirring Martha are emblems of contemplation and action, and as they dwell in one house, so must these in one heart ; beautiful Rachel and fruitful Leah are emblems of knowledge and obedience, and as Jacob was married to both, so must the Christian, only with this difference, whereas Jacob was first married to Leah, and then to Rachel, the Christian must first be married to knowledge, and then to obedience. In one word, doing *cannot* be without knowing, and knowing *must* not be without doing.

2. But further, it is not every kind of doing God's will which is the qualification required. Our Saviour hath taught us to pray that God's will 'may be done on earth as it is in heaven ;' the most genuine sense whereof no doubt is, that men may do God's will as it is done by the angels ; and he that partaketh with them in felicity must imitate them in the duty.

More particularly, there are two properties of doing God's will, to wit, integrity and alacrity.

\* Est. in loc.

(1.) The will of God must be done fully, not in respect of exact performance (that is only for angels, not for saints, till they are glorified), but of sincere endeavour. To fulfil every iota of divine precept is impossible ; to have respect to every precept is needful for every man who will be happy. The truth is, he that doth God's will with exception, doth not God's will, but his own ; hence it is that when God's will crosseth his, he crosseth God's will ; and who can esteem him a good servant who will do his master's injunctions no further than it agreeth with his inclination. To do God's will aright is to do it *as* his will ; and *à quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*, saith the logician, he that performeth any duty under this notion, that it is the will of God, will for the same reason account himself obliged to the performance of every thing which he knoweth to be God's will.

(2.) God's will must be done cheerfully. To bring God's will to ours is abominable ; to bring our will to God's, praiseworthy ; and thus we do when our will freely consents to, nay, maketh choice of, God's will for its rule. Thus did David, who saith of himself, Ps. xl. 6, 'Lo, I come to do thy will ;' and again, 'I delight to do thy will, O God.' Thus our blessed Saviour saith, John iv. 34, it was his 'meat and drink to do his Father's will.' Never went the hungry or thirsty man with a better will to his meat and drink than Christ did to do his Father's pleasure. And truly when all is done, it is the will God looketh at in doing his will ; when the will is present, the deed will follow, if there be opportunity and ability, else it is a wishing, not a willing ; and if the deed be performed without the free and full consent of the will, it will nothing avail ; yea, whereas sometimes and in some cases the will is accepted and rewarded without the deed, the deed is never without the will, so that not only to avoid but abhor whatever God forbids, not only to act but affect whatever God enjoineth, is to do the will of God.

And now, before I go further, here is a double consideration offereth itself to induce the doing God's will, namely, *cujus* and *qualis*, whose and what will it is. The former is expressed, the latter is easily inferred from the former.

1. It is the will of God, to whom we owe whatever we are or can do ; and shall we not do his will ? He is our Master, our Father, our King. Solomon saith, 'Where the word of a king is, there is power ;' much more where the word of a God is. He is the supreme Majesty, having absolute sovereignty, and therefore his will is most justly a law. Shall we refuse to do it ? God himself reasoneth, 'If I be a Father, where is my honour ? if I be a Master, where is my fear ?' Nature teacheth children to do their father's will. *Pater est, et si pater non esset*, said he in the comedy, It is my father, otherwise I would not yield ; and the very notion of a servant is to be at the will and command of his lord. In which respect service is defined by

Cicero,\* to be *obediencia animi arbitrio carentis suo*, the obedience of a mind destitute (as it were) of its own free will. If, therefore, we will approve ourselves faithful servants, obedient children, loyal subjects, let us do his will; so much the rather considering that,

2. Being it is his will, it cannot but be most just and equal. It is impossible God should will us to do anything which is not most agreeable to right reason, since he doth not will anything because it is right, but it is right because he wills it. St Paul's epithets of the will of God are *good, perfect, acceptable*, Rom. xii. 2; indeed, since whatever God wills us to do, is not only good but perfect, well may it be acceptable. The prophet Micah puts these two together, Micah vi. 8, 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord thy God requireth of thee;' thereby intimating that God requireth nothing of us but what is good, and therefore most fitting to be obeyed.

By what you have already heard, it plainly appeareth that the doing God's will is very reasonable; but if this will not prevail, behold, here is a further inducement in the text. The doing God's will is not only reasonable but profitable; and I trust if the beauty of this virgin obedience cannot attract you, yet her dowry will invite you, which is no less than eternal happiness. And so I am fallen on the

2. Remuneration, as it is set forth in these words, *abideth for ever*, an assertion which at first seemeth false, at least defective.

(1.) It seemeth false, since obedient saints die as well as disobedient sinners. Indeed, the good angels doing God's will endure for ever, but good men, notwithstanding their obedience, are liable to a dissolution. It is God's decree that his servants as well as his enemies should 'walk through the shadow of death,' and their doing his will of command cannot exempt them from fulfilling his will of decree. It was the prophet Isaiah's complaint in his time, Isa. lvii. 1, 'the righteous perisheth;' nay, whilst the wicked continue the righteous are taken away. 'Your fathers, where are they? the prophets, do they live for ever?' is the prophet Zechariah's question, Zech. i. 5, intending a negation. The prophets, though such as both did and declared God's will, yet lived not for ever. Abraham was a pattern of obedience and conformity to God's will, and yet he escaped not the axe of death.

But to all this the answer is easily returned, and that two ways:

[1.] He abideth for ever, not in this, but the other world. This world passeth away (as he saith just before), and good as well as bad are only passengers through this world, but in the other world they shall have a durable habitation. In which respect death is no impediment, but rather an help to put them in possession of that eternity; and therefore saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 1, 'If this earthly house of our taber-

\* Cic. parad.

nacle be dissolved, we have a building made without hands, eternal in the heavens.' Consonant hereunto it is that Christ saith of the believer, 'He hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day,' to wit, to the actual fruition of that life in another, which he had only by faith and hope in this world.

[2.] Or we may thus expound it, 'he abideth for ever,' to wit, in his soul.\* When our Saviour saith, Mat. xxii. 31, 'God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,' and presently addeth, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,' he seemeth to intimate that those patriarchs do now live, to wit, in their souls; and we read expressly, Rev. vi. 9, that St John 'saw the souls of them that were slain under the altar,' that is (as some gloss), with Christ, who is the Christian's altar, so that it is true both ways, he abideth in his soul for ever without any interruption, and though he must go out of this world, he abideth for ever in his person in the world to come.

(2.) But it may yet further be objected, that this is a defective assertion, for what is there in this of reward to continue for ever? Are not the souls of the wicked immortal as well as of the godly? Shall not the bodies of the bad be raised as well as of the good? Will not the state of the disobedient in the other world be eternal, as well as of the obedient? And how, then, is this annexed as a promise to the doer of God's will, that he abideth for ever?

But to this it is justly answered, that more is intended than is expressed. It is not a mere continuance of being, but an eternity of well-being.† 'You have need of patience' (saith the author to the Hebrews), 'that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise,' Heb. x. 36. And will you know what the promise is? Our apostle tells you in this chapter, verse 25, it is eternal life; so that we must expound this by that, it is not only abiding, but living for ever, which is here assured. Indeed, though the wicked shall continue for ever, yet when the Scripture speaketh of their future state, it is called a perishing for ever. If you would know where are the *μόναι πολλάι*, the many mansions or abiding places, John xiv. 2, Christ tells his disciples it is in his Father's house, that is, in heaven, in God's presence; so that to abide eternally in the beatifical vision, in the place and state of happiness, is that which is here intended by our apostle.

If any shall ask a reason how it cometh to pass that, by doing God's will, we obtain an eternity of bliss?

I answer, Both in regard of God and his will or word.

1. St Cyprian, quoting this text,‡ addeth by way of explication, *Quomodo Deus manet in aeternum*, he abideth for ever as God abideth for ever. And that

\* Agitur de vitâ animæ.—*Dun.*

† Agitur de felicitate et gloriosa mansione.—*Dun. Est.*

‡ Cypri. de Discipul. et hab.



this is implied will appear by the connection, for as there it is expressed that 'the world passeth away,' so here it is implied that 'God abideth for ever,' the comparison being made both between God and the world, and the lovers of God, and the lovers of the world. So, then, God is  $\alpha$  and  $\omega$ , the beginning and the end; he inhabiteth eternity, and with him is no variableness or shadow of changing. And though eternity in its most comprehensive notion be peculiar to a deity, and incommunicable to any creature, yet eternity *a parte post* is that which God hath made rational creatures capable of; and as he abideth for ever, so will he grant to them that do his will to abide with him for ever.

2. Danaeus, commenting upon this clause, thus paraphraseth, *Sicut voluntas Dei est aeterna, ita qui facit voluntatem Dei*, as God's will is eternal, so he that doth it must needs be eternal. St Peter having illustrated the frailty of man by the resemblance of the grass and the flower, 1 Peter i. 24, 25, presently addeth, but 'the word of the Lord' (which is his revealed will) 'endureth for ever.' Now, God's will and word is said to endure for ever, not only because it is of eternal verity in itself, but because it maketh them capable of eternity who obey it. And the apostle, in the same place, a little before, affirmeth of believers that they are 'born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever,' to wit, not only *subjectivè* in itself, but *effectivè*, making them who are born again of it eternal; and if you would know how we are born again, our Saviour tells us when he saith, Luke viii. 21, 'He that doth the will of God is my mother, my brother,' to wit, by this new birth. For this reason it is that Christ calls his word the 'meat that endureth to everlasting life,' John vi. 28, because, being eaten by faith, and digested by obedience, it nourisheth the soul to eternity. No wonder that our apostle here asserteth, 'He that doth the will of God abideth for ever.'

And now, brethren, if this consideration cannot induce us to the doing God's will, what will? If any man should come and pretend to tell us how we might abide for ever in this world, we would readily receive, and speedily follow, his advice. But, alas, the most learned and experienced physician, though he may prescribe rules, *de servandâ valetudine*, of preserving health for a time, cannot give any *de tuendo à morte*, for the escaping of death; whereas we set before you the way to an eternal duration, in a far better world, and are forced to complain with the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 1, 'Who hath believed our report?' Is there any of us so brutish, as not to desire participation of a blessed eternity? Surely, as Paul said to Agrippa, 'Believest thou the prophets? I know thou believest,' I may say in this, 'Desirest thou to be happy? I know thou desirest it;' and if so, see here,

by doing God's will, thou shalt have thy own; if thou endeavour to fulfil his commands, he will satisfy thy desires. Doing God's precepts for a time on earth will obtain the enjoying God's face for ever in heaven. What then was Mary's commendation, let it be our imitation: 'She chose that good part which shall not be taken from her,' Luke x. 42; that is, saith Grotius, *Cujus fructus perpetuò mansurus*, whose benefit should remain for ever. And will you know what that good part was? It appeareth, by the context, to be sitting at Christ's feet, for this end, no doubt, that she may first learn, and then do God's will. Learn we to do likewise; let our first care be to know, and our next to do, what God hath required, that so we may now comfortably hope, and at last happily enjoy what he hath promised, an eternal mansion. And so much shall suffice to have been spoken of the clause considered in itself.

2. That which next presents itself to our meditation, and would by no means be left out, is the relative connection of this with what precedeth. And here both parts of this clause would be looked upon; and it is not unworthy our inquiry, how, and upon what account, they are brought in.

1. It may, at first view, seem somewhat strange that this qualification of doing God's will should be here inserted, as seeming to have little or no affinity with what precedeth. Had the apostle said, but he that loveth the Father, or had he said, but he that denieth these worldly lusts, it would have been very congruous; but how this cometh in, he *that doth the will of God*, is not so obvious. Yet, if you please to look into it a little more narrowly, you shall find it very suitable to the apostle's scope, and far more emphatical than if he had used either of the above-mentioned phrases; for,

(1.) In saying, not *he that loveth the Father*, but *he that doth the will of God*, the apostle sets down that which is the most real character of a true lover of the Father. There is nothing wherein men more deceive themselves than in this grace of loving God; there is scarce any man but layeth claim to it, and is ready to say, I love God with all my heart, so that, if St John had only said, *he that loveth God abideth for ever*, every man would have flattered himself with the hopes of this eternity. But in saying, *he that doth the will of God*, he hereby puts our love to God upon the trial, and that by such a character, as (if we impartially examine ourselves by it) I am afraid the love of most Christians towards God will be found base and counterfeit.

[1.] True love is not only affective, but active; ἀγάπη, say some, is from ἀγαν ποιεῖν. As fire is the most active element, so love is the most working grace. *Amor, si non operatur, non est*, saith St Gregory, If love act not, it is no love; so that what St James saith of faith may as truly be applied to love, 'Shew me thy faith, thy love, by thy works.'

[2.] Again, true love conformeth itself in will, affection, action, to the object loved. How fearful are we to offend, careful are we to please, whom we love! If a man's beloved bid him come, he cometh; go, he runneth; do this or that, he doth it. In which respect Isidore saith truly, *Qui Dei præcepta contemnit, Deum non diligit, neque enim regem diligimus si odio ejus leges habemus*, he that contemneth God's precepts doth not love him, no more than he doth his king who hateth his laws. The voice of love is, 'I am my beloved's,' wholly at his command, and that not only in a compliment, but reality. 'What wilt thou have me to do?' is love's question; be it never so difficult, love accounts it easy, and the very labour is beloved.

Would we, then, know whether we love God? Here is the trial: What do we? where is our obedience to his laws? our conformity to his will? Is it possible we should love him, and yet offend, grieve, dishonour him, and cast his commands behind our backs! 'If you love me,' saith our blessed Saviour, 'keep my commandments;' and again, 'You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you.' 'I love my master, and I will not go free,' saith the servant in the law. Oh let us approve the sincerity of our love by the reality of our obedience. For which cause, no doubt, it was that our apostle saith, not *he that loveth God*, but *he that doth the will of God*.

(2.) In saying, *he that doth the will of God*, our apostle saith as much as, *he that denieth the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life*, and somewhat more; so that as in the former consideration it appeareth to be a discriminating, so in this we shall find it a comprehensive character. For,

[1.] *Sui repudium, Christiani præjudium*, the first step in doing God's will is denying our own, and these lusts are the ebullitions of our own corrupt wills. To do God's will, is to obey his prohibitions, and these lusts are the principal objects of those prohibitions; so that the renouncing worldly lusts is plainly implied in this of doing God's will.

[2.] To do God's will is of a larger extent, inasmuch as it superaddeth the practice of the graces contrary to these lusts. Sobriety and chastity, justice and charity, modesty and humility, are but several branches of God's will; and these are manifestly opposite to the 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;' and therefore in saying, *he that doth God's will*, he saith, he that is temperate, and merciful, and humble; and calls not only for a forsaking evil lusts, but a performance of the contrary graces. So that hereby our apostle teacheth us, that to attain eternal felicity, it is not enough to be free from these lusts, but we must exercise ourselves to virtue; to cleanse ourselves from filthiness, but we must perfect holiness; and the reason is plain, since we cannot be happy but by doing God's will. God's will is expressed, not only by the prohibitions of evil, but prescriptions of good; and therefore we cannot do God's

will unless we act what is commanded, as well as shun what is forbidden. So that, whether you take this qualification as in opposition to those lusts mentioned in the sixteenth verse, or as an explanation of the love of the Father, mentioned in the fifteenth verse, it appeareth to be very fitly made choice of.

2. But that in which the connection chiefly lieth, and which will more easily appear, is the remuneration, that *enduring for ever*, which is promised to him that doth God's will. And, doubtless, there was a double reason why our apostle, having spoken of the world's transitoriness, addeth by way of amplification, this clause of eternal felicity: the one in regard of the world, that it may appear so much the more transitory; the other in regard of the worldly lover, that his folly, in setting his heart upon the world, may appear so much the more foolish, yea, abominable.

And of each a word.

(1.) The world, considered absolutely, is transitory; but if compared with eternity, it is momentary. Surely as St Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 17, speaking of the 'afflictions of this present time,' in comparison with that 'exceeding eternal weight of glory,' affirmeth them to be 'light,' and but 'for a moment,' so may we, upon the same ground, of all the enjoyments of this life. As all the splendour of this world, in respect of that felicity, is but as the light of a glow-worm to the sun, so the longest continuance of this world, in regard of that eternity, is but as the drop of the bucket to the ocean. Suppose the time of the world's continuance to last a million of years, yet that million is but a moment to eternity. Indeed, a million of years is far less in comparison of eternity, than an hour is in comparison of a million of years; and the reason is plain, because eternity infinitely exceeds a million, whereas a million doth but finitely exceed an hour. You may easily count how much longer a million is than an hour, but you can never reckon how much eternity is longer than a million; so that our apostle could not have found out a fitter way of illustrating this truth than this.

There are many things which he might have compared the world to; we meet with them often in Scripture, and indeed they are very significant; but this that he compareth the present world with that to come, serveth far more clearly to represent it. Indeed, as a dwarf placed by a giant seemeth exceeding little, or as a mite weighed in the balance with a talent is exceeding light, so these worldly, when set by heavenly things, appear exceeding base, vile, and transitory.

Oh, then, let it be our frequent practice to meditate on the things above, deliberately to ponder their excellency, eternity, that so the things below may seem so much the more perishing and contemptible in our eyes. The first thing God made in this circular world was the heavens, and the last was man. In a circle, the beginning and the end meet and close together; so



should man and heaven ; and as to him that stands on an high hill, giants seem dwarfs, so to the man whose conversation is in heaven, the greatest things of earth cannot but appear small. It is observed of Abraham, that addressing himself in prayer to God, he calleth himself 'dust and ashes,' no doubt in consideration of the divine glory and majesty. And to him who duly considereth that incorruptible inheritance, immarcescible crown, and never-fading paradise, all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, must needs seem of a short, very short continuance, such indeed as is not worth the naming.

(2.) And as the world's sagacity, so the worldling's folly, becometh hereby the more manifest. To build upon the sands is foolish, but to prefer the sands before the rock, is yet far more foolish ; to settle upon that which is flitting, argueth want of wisdom, but to do it with the contempt of that which is lasting, argueth most desperate folly. Yet thus doth the worldling : an happy eternity is offered to him, upon the terms of doing God's will, and yet, to fulfil his own lusts, he maketh choice of this temporal prosperity. Like that wretched duke, who would not change Paris for paradise, he had rather have a short life, and, as he calleth it, a sweet one on earth, than an happy and everlasting life in heaven. In one word, to use Gregory Nazianzen's\* comparison, he fixeth upon that which is transient, and passeth by that which is permanent ; and can there be a greater madness ? Indeed, it discovereth him void, not only of grace, but reason : that whereas the apostle saith a little before, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,' we may add, 'If any man love the world, the reason of a man is not in him.' And more truly may every such man take up that concerning himself which Agur said, 'I am brutish, and have not the understanding of a man.' *Angustum est cor*, saith Gillebertus,† that heart is too narrow which confineth itself within the bounds of temporal pleasures ; but that is too narrow an expression, it is an argument not only of a narrow heart, but a frantic brain, to doat on toys, and neglect pearls.

Oh then, learn we at last to be wise, and set a right value upon things. Seneca saith excellently, † it is a matter of no small concernment, *pretium rebus imponere*, to put a just estimate upon things ; and one, nay, the chief rule by which the worth of things is to be measured, is their durance. *Id bonum cura*, saith the same author pithily, *quod retustate fit melius* : covet that good, which, the older it is, the better it is. Who would not prefer golden and silver before earthen and glass vessels ; and that, as for others, so this reason, that these are soon broken in pieces, but those are little the worse for using. Oh that this reason might sway with us to take off our affections from earth and place them in heaven !

\* Gr. Naz. Orat. xliii.

† Sen. Ep.

† Gillebert. serm. 29 in Cant.

Whenas Lysimachus, being very thirsty, had parted with his kingdom for a little water, he crieth out, *Ob quam brevem voluptatem ! summam amisi felicitatem !* how great a treasure have I lost for a short pleasure ! Could you but lay your ears to hell, you might hear the like despairing moans from those damned spirits. What an eternity of bliss have we lost for a momentary contentment ! Fools, madmen that we were, to pursue those delights which are now ended in torments, and neglect those joys which we might now have possessed for ever ! But oh, how much better were it for us now to be convinced of, and reclaimed from, this brutish simplicity ! Excellent to this purpose is that of St Bernard,\* *Ne casuri gloriam mundi quasi stantem aspiciatis, et verè stantem amittatis, &c.* O you mortals, do not look upon the glory of the world as abiding, and in the mean time lose that which abideth for ever. Let not your present prosperity so far bewitch you as not to regard that future felicity, nor yet to take notice of that endless misery which is the end of it.

That brutes, which are led only by sense, should mind nothing but what is before them, is no wonder ; but God forbid that men, whose reasonable souls are capable of seeing afar off, should only regard what is present. That pagans, who know little or nothing of the future eternity, should busy their thoughts, desires, and endeavours about these perishing comforts, is no wonder ; but, as Leo well, † *ad aterna præ-electos peritura non occupent*, far be it from us Christians to regard these objects, who are not only acquainted with, but ordained to, eternal bliss. When Alexander heard of, and was resolved for, the riches of India, he divided Macedonia among his captains ; and shall not we who hear of, and hope for, a glorious mansion, condemn these worldly cottages ? When Serapion read in the Bible of the joys of heaven, he left his earthly possessions, saying, *Hic liber me spoliavit*, this book hath spoiled me. In that, his zeal was too rash ; but the assurance we have of those eternal joys should engage us (though not wholly to relinquish, yet) not to love these temporal contentments. *Quis alius noster finis*, saith St Austin, *quam pervenire ad regnum ejus non est finis ?* What is our ultimate end, but to come to that kingdom whereof there is no end ? And shall we so live in this world, which shall have an end, as if the world were to be our chief end ? Far be it from us. So often, therefore, as the vanities of earth affect us, let our meditations fly upwards to the glories of heaven ; and according to the father's counsel, † let us begin to be there now in our thoughts and desires, where we hope to be at last in our persons.

To draw to an end. In this scripture, our apostle seemeth to put us to our choice, setting before us vanity and verity, instability and permanency ; nay,

\* Bern. Ep. 64.

† Leo Serm. de Resur.

† Incipe esse ubi futurus es.—*Ibid.*

in effect, perishing misery, and abiding felicity. And now, to use St Austin's interrogation,\* *Quid vis?* what wilt thou? Whether wilt thou love the temporals, and pass away with time, or not love this world, and live for ever with God? The truth is, as that same father elegantly, *Talis est quisque, qualis est dilectio*, every man is such as his love is: if he loveth earth, earthly; if heaven, heavenly; if the perishing world, thou shalt perish; if the eternal God, thou shalt live eternally. Love is an uniting, mingling affection; and according to that with which it is mingled it is either pure or impure. So that, look, as silver, if mingled with lead, is debased, if with gold, advanced, so thy soul, if by love mingled with the world, must perish, but if united to God, for ever happy. Oh, therefore, let it be the serious purpose of every one of us from henceforth to leave the world and cleave to God, to abhor the lust of the one and do the will of the other, that so in the end of this life we may have

\* Aug. in loc.

the inchoation, and in the end of the world the consummation, of that happiness, which, though it have a beginning, shall know no ending.

And thus I have at length (through divine assistance) finished this golden period, worthy to be engraven upon the tables of epicures, the chests of mammonists, and the palaces of great ones. And though I have done with handling, yet I trust you will not with reading, remembering, and pondering it; yea, I would to God that every morning, before you go about your worldly affairs, you would resolve this scripture in your mind, with a prayer to God to imprint it on your hearts: 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.'

## SERMON XLVI.

*Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*—1 JOHN II. 18, 19.

**T**HIS present world is not without just cause branded as one of the greatest enemies of our salvation, and that especially upon a double account, inasmuch as the things of this world, by alluring our wills, lead us into vice; and the men of this world, by perverting our judgments, draw us into errors. Both of these are so dangerous, that it is hard to determine which is the worst. St Paul's epithets of lusts, 1 Tim. vi. 7, are *foolish and hurtful*; St Peter's character of heresy, 2 Peter ii. 1, is *dammable*; these as well as those drowning men in perdition and destruction. No wonder if this holy apostle caution those to whom he wrote of both these rocks; and as in the foregoing verses he warneth them of being defiled with the mud of worldly lusts, so in these he taketh care that they might not be infected with the venom of antichristian doctrine: 'Little children, it is the last time,' &c.

The subsequent part of this chapter, from the eighteenth verse to the nine-and-twentieth, hath a special reference to, and dependence on, the exhortation which is mentioned in verse the four-and-twentieth, iterated verse the eight-and-twentieth, and is in order the seventh step of that lightsome walk which our apostle's chief design is to delineate in this epistle, namely, a stedfast perseverance in the doctrine and faith of Christ. In order to this it is that here are three things discussed.

1. *Periculum.* The great danger they were in of being withdrawn from the truth, by reason of the

many antichrists which (this being the last hour) were now among them, who taught abominable lies, denying both God and Christ; and this is handled in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and again in the two and three-and-twentieth, and again in the six-and-twentieth verse.

2. *Auxilium.* The chief help which God had afforded them against this danger, that sacred unction which did inform them fully of the truth, and thereby was able to preserve them from error; and this is in the twentieth and one-and-twentieth, and again inculcated in the seven-and-twentieth verse.

3. *Motivum.* The strong inducements to persuade their constancy in the faith, that hereby their fellowship with God and Christ might be continued, the promise of eternal life obtained, and their confidence at the coming of Christ strengthened; and this is enlarged in the four, five, and eight-and-twentieth verses.

In these two verses which I have now read, the scope of our apostle is double, namely,

To discover a danger, that they might not be ensnared by;

To prevent a scandal, that they might not be offended at those false teachers which were among them; the former in the eighteenth, and the latter in the nineteenth verse.

In handling the eighteenth verse, which is the discovery of the danger, that we may proceed according



to the order of the words, be pleased to observe these three parts:

An appellation, *Little children*.

An affirmation, *It is the last time*.

A confirmation, in the rest of the verse, *And as you have heard, &c.*

A word of the first, the appellation, or title here used, *Little children*. It is sometimes used as a word of imperfection, whether in regard of age, denoting such as are not come to maturity of years, or in regard of grace, such as are weak in faith, and in this sense Beza here construeth it.\* Indeed, this *careat* is very needful for such, who, being children, are apt to be 'tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine,' but yet not only for such; and when I find the apostle commending (and that, doubtless, without flattery) those to whom he writeth for their knowledge of the truth, ver. 21, I cannot imagine that he intends the word *children* in this notion. Rather with Danaeus, † as I conceive, *omnes eujuscunq̄ ætatis hic monet*, he speaketh to all of all ages in Christianity, not only to children, but young men and fathers; and so the *παιδία* here is of the same notion with *παιδία* in the beginning of the chapter. Suitable whereunto it is that the Syriac useth the same word in both places; and, as Grotius well observeth, ‡ it is *blanda appellatio*, a word of affection, by which our apostle would let us see that parents are not more desirous of their little children's safety, and studious of their welfare, than he was of theirs, and that tender love and parental care which he had over them induced him to warn them of those antichrists which would infest and infect them. But having once and again handled this title in this notion, I shall insist no longer upon it, but pass on to the

2. Affirmation, as it followeth in the text, 'It is the last time.'

The only question here to be resolved is in reference to what our apostle asserts, the time in which he lived to be the last.

(1.) The general opinion of divines refer it to the world; and so this clause seemeth to be a proof of what is asserted in the former verse, § 'The world passeth away,' for even now is 'the last time' of the world's duration, beyond which it shall not continue.

In this sense the whole space of time, from Christ's first to his last coming, is the last time. Those are the last days concerning which Joel prophesieth, that in them God would 'pour out his Spirit on all flesh,' Joel ii. 28; for in the very beginning of the evangelical times the apostle telleth us, Acts ii. 17, that prophecy was fulfilled. These are the last days in which the author to the Hebrews saith, Heb. i. 1, 2, that 'God, who spake to the fathers by his prophets, hath spoken to us by his Son,' who, coming in our flesh,

\* Beza. in loc.

† Grot. ibid.

‡ Dan. in loc.

§ Probat quod dixit.—Lap.

revealed his Father's will to the world; and in this notion the assertion is true, that even in St John's days it was the last time of the world. This being taken for the meaning of the clause, it would rationally be inquired upon what account this space of time (which hath already continued so long, and when it shall expire is unknown) may be called the last.

Æcumenius giveth a double answer, \* but neither satisfactory.

[1.] He saith, it is called the last because the worst, as lees and dregs are in the bottom of the liquor; but, though possibly the last time may be the worst, yet is it not therefore the last because the worst, or the worst because the last.

[2.] He addeth, that if we divide time into the first, the middle, and the last, whatsoever time is after the middle is the last, and accordingly all the time before Christ may be called the first, and since his coming, the last. But though we read that God sent his Son into the world 'in the fulness of time,' yet not that it was in the middle of time; and whether the world shall not last longer after, than the time of its continuance before, the Messiah's incarnation, is a question which, though some have rashly undertaken, yet I am sure none can justly resolve. As for that opinion, that as the world was six days in making, so it shall be only six thousand years in lasting, it is but a rabbinical conceit, and a groundless dream. Nor doth St Peter's assertion, 2 Peter iii. 10, that 'a thousand years is with the Lord as one day,' at all favour this opinion, since it seemeth rather to be uttered on a contrary design, namely, to let us know that how many thousand years soever the world shall last, yet God is not therefore slack, since with him they are but as so many days.

That, indeed, which seemeth the most rational account of this phrase in this notion is, that it is the last time, because it is the last period of time; and the Messiah being come, there are now no more changes or alterations of the external administrations in religion to be expected. The life of man, the little world, is a fit emblem of the duration of this great world, and look as there are three ages of man's life, youth, manhood, and old age, so the world hath three periods, from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, from Christ's first to his last coming; and as old age (though it many times be as long as either, nay, it may be as both) is called the last age, because death is that which next succeeds after it, so this period of the evangelical time, how long soever it may be, is the last time, because that which closeth it is the day of judgment. In which respect St Austin saith truly, † *Ipsa novissima hora diuturna est, sed tamen novissima hora*, the last time is long, but yet it is the last time. Look as the time of Job's continuance upon earth after his restitution to a prosperous estate, which was an hundred and forty years, and so a large part of his

\* Æcumen. in loc.

† Aug. in loc.

life, is yet called 'the latter end of Job,' Job xlii. 12-16, so may this of the evangelical administration, though of a long durance, be styled the latter end of the world.

And upon this account it may serve to discover the folly of that generation of seekers, which, among the numerous brood of heresies, hath sprouted forth amongst us. In vain do they expect a new church, new ordinances, new administrations, whenas this is the last time. St Paul plainly tells us that the Christian church, by administering the holy sacrament, must 'shew forth the Lord's death till he come,' that is, to judge the quick and the dead; and surely, by way of analogy, it holds true of all the evangelical institutions. There is nothing to be expected but the 'glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, in the end of the world.'

(2.) But though this interpretation may be true, it is very harsh, especially considering that the word which we translate *time* signifieth that which is one of the shortest durations of time, an hour; and it may be very well looked upon as incongruous, that so large a space of time should be called an hour. I know expositors\* endeavour to solve this by telling us that it is but an hour, *comparatione futuri sæculi* (so Carthusian), in comparison of the duration of the other world; and to the same purpose Calvin, *Si regni Dei æternitas, &c.*; if we revolve in our minds the eternity of God's kingdom, the longest continuance will seem but a moment. But though this be in itself an undeniable verity, yet it is not any more a reason why the time from Christ's first to his last advent should be called an hour, than why the whole time of the world, from the first to the last man, should be so called. Upon this consideration, perhaps, it was that Cajetan conceiveth St John's meaning might be, that the time wherein he lived was like to the last hour; and as it should be at the end of the world, so it was then. But this construction is too forced; nor is it rational to imagine that when St John saith 'it is,' and again, 'by this we know it is the last hour,' he meaneth only a resemblance.

If, then, there be something else to which this last hour may, upon a more just account, be referred, doubtless that must needs be the most genuine interpretation, and this we shall find to be, not the world, but the Jewish church and state, whose end was then at hand. I confess Socinus is the first in whom I meet with this construction; † but I shall not refuse to pick up a pearl though I find it in a dunghill, and as I shall never receive, so neither will I reject, any exposition because of the person that bringeth it. Besides him, that learned Mr Mede, occasionally ‡ speaking of these words, conceiveth it to be the last hour of Daniel's seventy weeks, and so, consequently, of the Jews' commonwealth. Suitable whereunto is

\* Carthus. et Calv. in loc. † Socin. in loc.

‡ Mede's Apostasy of latter Times.

the annotation both of H. Grotius and Dr Hammond, to whom, for their excellent illustrations of many scriptures, this age is, and future will be, much beholding. The only objection that can lie against this interpretation is, that this epistle was written after the destruction of Jerusalem; but this can only be said, not proved. True, St John outlived that desolation, but this epistle might be written before it, yea, this text renders it very probable; and accordingly Mr Mede conceiveth it might be written in the last of Daniel's weeks, about which time Jesu Ananiah began that woful cry,\* Woe to Jerusalem, woe to the temple.

Taking the clause in this construction, the emphasis of this word *hour* will prompt two things to our meditation, that the time of the Jews' ruin was a set time, and a short time.

1. An hour is a measured part of time, consisting of a set number of minutes, whereby is intimated that the time of Jerusalem's ruin was fixed, and her years numbered. It is that which would be considered in a double reference, to wit, as the Jews were a nation, and a church.

(1.) Consider them as a nation and people, and we may see in them this truth exemplified: that to all nations there is an appointed time how long they shall continue. He that sets bounds to the sea, Job xxxviii. 11, 'Hitherto shalt thou pass, and no further,' sets periods to all the kingdoms of the earth, Thus long they shall flourish, and no longer. The signification of that word *MENE*, which the hand wrote upon the wall concerning Belshazzar, Dan. v. 36, 'God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it,' carrieth in it a general truth concerning all monarchies, kingdoms, states. The number of the years for their continuation, and the term of time for their expiration, is determined by God. What is become of the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires, whose glorious splendour, in a certain space of time, vanished away? Indeed, according to the poet's† expression,

Momento permagna ruunt, summisque negatum  
Stare diu,

though some nations flourish longer than others, yet all have their autumn as well as spring, winter as well as summer; and when the time registered in heaven is accomplished on earth, the most potent politic kingdoms moulder away in a moment.

(2.) Consider them as a church, and God's people, it lets us see that, as kingdoms, so churches have their periods. Indeed, the universal church shall not fail; God will have, if not in one place, yet in another, an orb wherein the light of his truth shall shine (though not always with the same clearness) to the day of judgment. But still particular churches have their doleful eclipses, yea, their dismal settings, by the removing of the sun of the gospel from them. Those seven churches of Asia are deplorable instances

\* Joseph. Jud. Bell. l. 7.

† Claud.



of this doctrine, who, though once golden candlesticks, holding forth the word of life, are now enveloped in Mahometan darkness.

Oh see, my brethren, what sin will do to nations, to churches; for though it is God who determineth, yet it is sin which deserveth their ruin. That which moveth God to remove the candlestick from a church, is their contempt of the light; that which provoketh God to put a period to a kingdom's prosperity, is their heightened iniquity; and, therefore, when we behold (as we of this land at this day sadly do) a flourishing church withered, a goodly kingdom overturned, oh let us so acknowledge God's hand, as to blame our own demerits, since it is upon foresight of a people's transgression that God prefixeth a time for their destruction.

2. An hour is a short space of time; there are many parts of time longer,—days, weeks, months, years, jubilees, ages,—but there is only one shorter, to wit, minutes; nay, the shortest time by which men commonly reckon is the hour, with its several parts; so that, where our apostle saith it was the last hour, he intends that it was but an hour, that is, a very short time, and Jerusalem should be destroyed. Look as when the duration of an affliction is set forth by an hour, it noteth the brevity of its continuance; so when the coming of an affliction is measured by an hour, it noteth the celerity of its approach. In the former sense, we read elsewhere of an 'hour of temptation,' Rev. iii. 10; and here, in the latter, that it is 'the last hour.'

Indeed, if we look upon the Jews at this very time, we shall find they were very secure, not dreaming of so near and great a destruction. The characters which St James giveth of the rich Jews are, James v. 3, 5, that 'they heaped treasure together, they lived in pleasure, were wanton, and nonrished their hearts as in a day of slaughter; they indulged to their covetous and voluptuous lusts, putting the evil day far from them; and yet those were the last days, as that apostle calls them, nay, the last hour in our apostle's language. In this respect it is that our Saviour, speaking of this destruction, Mat. xxiv. 37, foretellet it should be then 'as it was in the days of Noah, when they ate and drank, married and gave in marriage, till the day that Noah entered into the ark,' as being overwhelmed with a general security when ready to be overwhelmed with the flood.

Thus may judgment be at hand when men think it far off, and the judge stand at the door when the thief imagines he is many miles distant. 'When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they cannot escape,' is the sad threatening which St Paul utters against presumptuous sinners, 1 Thes. v. 3. Wicked men are never more secure than when destruction is nearest, and destruction is never nearer than when they are most secure. Indeed, when men through infidelity condemn, it is high time for God to

execute his threatenings, that by hastening his wrath he may justify his truth. It is but reason that they who will not believe should feel, and what they would not learn by the word they should find in their own sad experience. Take we heed, therefore, how we look at the wrong end of the perspective, which makes the object seem at a greater distance than it is. Alas! how soon may the brightest sky be overcast! Voluptuous epicures (saith Job), chap. xxi. 13, 'spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to the grave.' When judgment cometh, it cannot be avoided, and too often it surpriseth men before it is expected. Whilst the wicked Jews were encompassed with plenty, and promised themselves tranquillity, St John foretells their misery, and that as approaching, 'It is the last hour.'

To close up this clause with a moral application: *Monet hoc verbo apostolus, ut omnem horam veluti novissimam reputemus*, saith Ferus piously;\* our apostle doth here admonish every particular man, that he should still think every hour to be his last. Indeed, the time of every man's life is fixed in God's eternal counsel; it is Job's divinity, and that not only in regard of himself, but man indefinitely, or rather universally considered: 'Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?' Job vii. 1; and again, xiv. 5, 'his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.' Nor is it any long time which is allotted, and therefore the swiftness of man's life is elegantly set forth by several metaphors, both in the book of Job, and other places of Scripture. Indeed, if the longest life be considered in reference to the eternity of that other life, it is but a day, nay, an hour, a minute. That it cannot be long, we are sure, and yet when it will expire we are not sure; and because we know not how soon, we should make account of it continually; and though we cannot say of every hour *This is or shall be*, yet to say, *This may be*, my last hour; and if you mark it, this is prompted to little children, who (as Grotius well observeth) are apt to think they have time enough before them,† and yet even with them it may be the last hour, since, though the old *must*, the young *may* die. No wonder if he speak to children (saith St Austin‡), *Ut festinent crescere*, that they may make haste to grow in grace. That word in the Chaldee which signifieth an hour, is derived from a verb which signifieth to have regard to; so ought every man to observe the hours of his life, how they pass, there being none which might not be his last. And truly this consideration would have a great influence upon the precedent dehortation of not loving the world, as Clemenius observeth.§ A dying man is not at all taken with the choicest dainties, richest treasures, highest dignities; no more would we, if we did still look upon ourselves as dying. He will

\* Fer. in loc.

† Aug. in loc.

‡ Grot. in loc.

§ Clemen. in loc.

not trifle away his hours in pursuing worldly vanities, who considereth how quickly they pass away, and how soon they may be at an end. In one word, happy is that man who so thinketh of his last hour, as that he doth that every hour which he would be found doing in his last, at least who doth nothing in any which he durst not be found doing in his last hour. And so much for the second general part, the affirmation, 'It is the last hour.' I now hasten (lest I should exceed the hour) to the

3. Last part of the text, the confirmation, as it followeth in the rest of the verse: 'And as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.'

Before I enter upon the severals of this general, it will be needful to spend a little time in clearing the sense of ὁ ἀντιχριστός, 'the antichrist' here spoken of. The generality of interpreters, observing the article prefixed before the noun, conceive that the apostle intends by this ὁ ἀντιχριστός the same with St Paul's ὁ ἀντιχριστός, him who is transcendently antichrist; and should I trace this exposition, I must fall upon another inquiry, in the solution of which divines are of various opinions, namely, Who is this, *the antichrist*?

The ancients\* generally conceive that antichrist shall come towards the end of the world, whom Christ shall destroy by the brightness of his coming.

Some late writers† imagine that the antichrist came soon after the plantation of Christianity in the world, and fix it, some on Simon Magus, others on Barchobas, others on Claudius and Nero, emperors.

A great part of the reformed‡ assert the succession of popes from the time that the bishop of Rome usurped the title of universal, to be the antichrist, which began about six hundred years after Christ, and, according to that prophetic account of one thousand two hundred and forty days, they suppose the continuance to be so many years.

Did I conceive that our apostle designeth this ὁ ἀντιχριστός to signify an antichrist, which is so above all other heretics and enemies of Christ whatsoever, yet positively to determine who he is, I should not undertake; only thus much I look upon as rational, that according to the definition which our apostle himself giveth of antichrist a little after, he who most directly, expressly, vehemently 'denieth Jesus to be the Christ,' and accordingly 'denieth both the Father and the Son,' he is the antichrist.

But that I may speak my thoughts freely, I can by no means be induced to believe that ὁ ἀντιχριστός, the antichrist, is here to be taken singularly and determinately, but indefinitely and collectively; for the clearing whereof, observe,

(1.) That it is very usual for a word of the singular number to denote a multitude, yea, not only without,

\* Iren. Greg. M. Hierom. † Grot. Dr. Ham.

‡ Cal. Jun. Polan, &c.

but with the article. Take one instance among many, that of St Paul, where he saith, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 'The Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable,' &c., 'that ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, the man of God may be perfect,' whereby is not understood some one that was so eminently, but indefinitely any, or rather universally every man of God; and it seemeth our translators understood this ὁ ἀντιχριστός no otherwise, since both here and in other places they render it not *the*, but *an*, as also ὁ ψευδοῦς, a liar; suitable to which it is that ὁ ἀρνούμενος is presently explained by πᾶς, HE, that is, *whosoever* denieth, ver. 21, 23.

(2.) That our apostle in the very next clause enlargeth this singular ὁ ἀντιχριστός, *the antichrist*, by that plural πολλοὶ ἀντιχριστοί, *many antichrists*, as in the next epistle, at the seventh verse, he contracts the plural, πολλοὶ πλανοί, *many deceivers*, into the singular, ὁ πλανήτης καὶ ὁ ἀντιχριστός, *a deceiver and an antichrist*.

I well know that the *antichrist* and *many antichrists* are by most interpreters severally referred, but withal in so doing they force the sense; whereas, if both be referred to the same, the construction is plain, for by this means the καὶ νῦν γεγόνασιν, 'even now there are,' answereth fitly to the καθὼς ἠκούσατε, as you have heard, the latter clause testifying the impletion of the prediction alleged in the former. Nay, more, the ἐν τοῦτω γινώσκουμεν that followeth, 'by which we know it is the last hour,' can have no solid strength in it, if the former be not thus interpreted, since unless that which our apostle allegeth as foretold, that antichrist should come, to wit (before the last hour), were then accordingly accomplished, and so attested, when he saith, 'even now there are many antichrists,' it could have been no symptom by which they could conclude that it was then the last hour. That which serves further to justify this construction is, that our apostle, as here he assereth the fulfilling of the prediction by the plural, 'there are many antichrists,' so in this epistle elsewhere, chap. iv. 3, he affirmeth in the singular, τοῦτο ἐστὶ τοῦ ἀντιχριστοῦ, 'This is that spirit of antichrist which you have heard shall come, and is now already in the world.' I shall only add, that this ὁ ἠκούσατε 'which you have heard' is, if not only, yet without doubt principally, to be referred to that of our Saviour in the Gospel, Mat. xxiv., wherein we find nothing concerning the great antichrist, but only those antichrists which either were to precede, or else immediately to follow, the destruction of Jerusalem.

No doubt, then, the plain design of this part of the verse is this: our apostle having before affirmed that it was the last hour of Jerusalem's reign, he confirms it by this strong medium, that which our blessed Lord foretold as an immediate forerunner of that destruction (to wit, the coming of antichrist), was now already fulfilled in the many antichrists which were among them.

According to this construction, there are three things observable in this part of the text:



A prediction, whereof they are minded, 'you have heard that antichrist should come.'

An impletion of that prediction assured, 'even now there are many Antichrists.'

The significance of that impletion expressed, 'whereby we know that it is the last hour.'

1. Our apostle minds those to whom he writeth, of our Saviour's prediction, that antichrist should come, whereby the great care of this chief shepherd of the sheep appeareth in forewarning them of those wolves which would devour them. It was that which Christ was pleased to do upon a double account :

1. The one in regard of his apostles, who were to be the leaders of his church, that they might be so much the more vigilant in observing the rise of seducers, and diligent in confirming the people in the orthodox faith. For this reason no doubt it was that St Paul, Acts xx. 30, gathered the elders of the Ephesian church together, and minded them of those perverse teachers which would ere long infest the church; and accordingly the inference he draweth thence is, *ὁὐ γινώσκετε*, 'therefore watch.'

2. The other in regard of the whole church, and every member, that they might not be too much troubled when false teachers shall arise. *Tela prævisa minus feriunt*, darts foreseen are less terrible and hurtful. All evils are then most grievous when unexpected; that danger whereof we are forewarned may either be more patiently sustained, or prudently avoided. For this reason Christ foretells his disciples of those persecutions which would befall them in particular, that they might not think strange at the fiery trial; for this cause he foretold them of those seducers which would endeavour to pervert Christians from the faith, that they might be less offended at them, and the more carefully take heed of them. Thus, after Christ's example, let all who are spiritual watchmen be vigilant in giving notice to the church militant of the approach of her enemies, that being forewarned, she may be forearmed to encounter with them.

2. What was thus foretold by Christ is accordingly come to pass: 'even now there are many antichrists.'

Before I go further, it will not be amiss to stay a while in this general meditation, to wit, the verity of divine predictions. As you have heard, it is now come to pass; it is that which is, and shall be, true of whatever hath been foretold by God, by Christ, and his prophets. 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled;' so saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. v. 18; where the stability of the law's prediction is compared with, and exalted above, the stability of the heaven and earth; for the heaven and earth, though lasting in their duration, shall pass away at last, but whatever is threatened or promised in the law shall infallibly receive its suitable accomplishment. Among those many glorious attributes, whereby God hath made known himself to the sons of men, that of his

truth and fidelity is not the least, which then shineth forth in its brightness, when he fulfilled what he hath said, since as the prediction giveth testimony to his prescience, so the impletion to his faithfulness.

Oh, then, with what fear and reverence should we receive his threats! With what hope and confidence should we embrace his promises! With what faith and credence should we adhere to all his predictions! You have heard, 2 Thes. i. 8, that 'God will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know him not;' 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, that 'neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God; that at the last day Christ will say to all the workers of iniquity, 'Depart from me, ye cursed.' Oh believe, and tremble, for the time will come that all impenitent sinners shall say, As we have heard, so we find; we sadly feel the execution of that vengeance which we proudly contemned and denounced. Again, you have heard that sweet voice, Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all you that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'; that evangelical charter, John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life;' that comfortable promise, Heb. ix. 28, 'Unto them that look for him, he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.' Oh be not faithless, but believing, for the day will come when all believing penitents shall say, 'As we have heard, so we have seen,' Ps. xlviii. 8. Indeed, it were easy to multiply the instances of this truth, how not only the substance, but the circumstances of Scripture predictions have been exactly accomplished, as well in regard of the time as the thing; but what need we go further than the text, wherein we have the punctual impletion of our Saviour's prophecy, concerning the rise of antichrists before Jerusalem's fall, asserted? 'Even now there are many antichrists.'

More particularly, in this assertion, we are to take notice of the quality and the quantity, the temper and the number, of those seducers which were in St John's time.

1. For quality, they are described to be antichrists: a word which, according to a double acception of the preposition *ἀντι*, may admit of a double construction, the one restrictive, the other extensive.

(1.) The preposition *ἀντι*, sometimes signifieth as much as *in the stead or place of*; thus, *ἀντιβασιλεύς*, is one that falsely calleth himself a king; and *ἀντιστατηγός*, is one that sets himself up in the general's room. In this notion, *ἀντιχριστός*, is one that pretends himself to be Christ, and is the same with *Ψευδοχριστός*, a false Christ. That such should be, our Saviour hath told them, Mat. xxiv. 5, where he saith, 'Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ.' That such were (as Theudas, whom Fadus discomfited,

and that Egyptian mentioned in the Acts, chap. xxi. 31, with many others), Josephus\* testifieth in several places, and to these our apostle here might have an eye. It lets us see how prone men are to arrogate to themselves that which they are not, whom the apostle taxeth under the name of boasters, 2 Tim. iii. 3; yea, to what an height of impudence such men sometimes grow, as to assume to themselves what is God's and Christ's peculiar. But if it be odious for one who is of a base extraction to usurp dominion, and being born a beggar to make himself a king, it is no less than blasphemy for base mortals to take upon them the name and authority of the Messiah.

(2.) The preposition *ἀντι*, most properly signifieth as much as *against*; so *ἀντιθέσις* is an opposition, or one axiom set against another; *ἀντιζήμενος*, is one who sets himself against another; and *ἀντιχριστός*, is one who withstandeth and oppugneeth Christ. This sort was also foretold by Christ, Mat. xxiv. 11, where he saith, 'Many false prophets shall arise;' and that our apostle chiefly intends these, appeareth by the definition he giveth of these antichrists, that they were such who 'denied Jesus to be the Christ,' which many did who yet did not assert themselves to be Christs. And to that apostolical definition I shall refer the larger prosecution of this subject. Pass we on therefore from the quality,

2. To the quantity, in that it is not said, as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even so now *he* is come, but that there are *many* antichrists. Indeed, our Saviour, speaking of both sorts, useth this very epithet, '*many* false Christs, and false prophets.' There were several *primipili* or *antesignani* of these black regiments, as Epiphanius and St Cyril have recounted them,† Simon Magus, Cerinthus, Menander, Carpocrates, with many others, and each of these had many followers; for Christ likewise foretold that they should 'deceive many,' and St Peter, that 'many shall follow their pernicious ways.' Indeed, heresy is of a spreading nature; so much St Paul intimateth, 1 Tim. ii. 17, when he saith of heretical teachers, 'their word will eat as doth a canker,' or gangrene, which stops not till it have infected and destroyed the whole body: a thing, saith Estius, so well known by sad experience, that it need not many words to attest it;‡ There is but one truth, but there are many errors; there is but one Christ, but there are many antichrists. False teachers are compared by St John to locusts, Rev. ix. 3, a sort of creatures of which Solomon observeth, that they go forth by bands, Prov. xxx. 27; yea, the Hebrew word *אַרְבֵּב*, which signifieth a locust, is derived from *רָבַב*, that signifieth to *multiply*, intimating the great multitudes of locusts; in which respect they are a fit emblem of false prophets. Our blessed Saviour, speaking of such, implicitly resembleth them to thorns and thistles, Mat.

vii. 15, 16; and the similitude holds in this, that as thorns and thistles grow everywhere in great numbers, so do these abound in every place. Of old there were four hundred lying prophets which deceived Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 19, xxii. 6, to one Micaiah that told him truth; four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, to one Elijah; in the primitive times there were a multitude of Arian bishops to one Athanasius, and thus still, *numerus pejor major*, the antichristian party is the greatest.

Take we heed then how we do *ὀρίζειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐκ τοῦ πληθοῦς*, according to Gregory Nazianzen's phrase, define the church of Christ by multitude. Certainly if number may carry the cause, antichrist's synagogue will far outvie the Christian churches; and therefore it is St Jerome's saying to a Pelagian heretic,\* *Multitudo sociorum nequoquam te catholicum sed hereticum esse monstrabit*, the multitude of thy fellows doth not prove you a catholic, but rather an heretic. That way in which the most walk, is for the most part to be suspected as a false path, for 'wide is the gate, and broad is the way,' saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. vii. 10, 'which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.' Indeed, when the number of the orthodox increaseth and prevaileth, it should be our joy, but if the number of the heterodox be greater, it need not be our wonder; only let our care be, that as, according to Moses his precept, we 'do not follow a multitude to do what is evil,' so neither to believe what is false. And so much for the second particular.

3. Lastly, by the coming of these antichrists, according as they had heard, they might know it was the last hour, and that Jerusalem's destruction was then at hand. To illustrate this briefly, know that there are three sorts of signs. Some are *memorative*, to mind us of what was long ago accomplished; for which end 'God hath set his bow in the clouds.' Some are *demonstrative*, to discover something that is newly existent; such was that of a child lying in a manger to the shepherds, in reference to the Messiah's birth. Finally, some are *prognostic*, to foretell something which is to come to pass. Now of this sort some are only probable, as a red evening of a fair day; others are certain, as Jonah's coming out after he had lain three days and three nights in the whale's belly, of Christ's resurrection; by those we only think and imagine, by these we know and are sure, that the thing shall be effected. Again, some are remote and at a great distance; such was that which God gave Abraham, Gen. xv. 6, of delivering his seed above four hundred years after out of Egypt. Some are nearer hand, and immediately preceding that whereof they are signs, as that to Hezekiah of his recovery, Isa. xxxviii. 7; by those we see it shall be, but not yet; by these that it shall be ere long. Of this latter sort was the coming of these antichrists in reference to Jerusalem's ruin,

\* Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. ii. Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. xii.

† Epiph. Hæc. Cyr. Catech. vi.

‡ Esti. ibid.

\* Hier. lib. iii. adv. Pelag.



for since Christ had foretold it as that which should a little precede that great desolation, it (being now come to pass) became not a probable, but a certain, not a remote, but an immediate, sign, by which they did not only rationally conjecture, but infallibly know; and that not only that there would be such an hour, but that then it was Jerusalem's last hour.

To wind it up; it is no small mercy of God to a people, that whenas he intends to bring a ruin on them, beforehand he giveth them warning. Among his many ways of warning this is one, that he foretells, and accordingly sends such signs which are forerunners of their desolation; his design in which is, partly in regard of the wicked, that if possible their sleepy consciences may be awakened to see, and by repentance to prevent that approaching ruin. And oh how happy might Jerusalem have been had they made use of these signs, partly in regard of the good, that they being hereby admonished might be the better fitted to undergo the temporal calamity, or (if God open a way) provide for their own safety, as the story tells us many of the godly Jews did,\* by flying to Pella before the city was sacked by the Romans.

And now (my brethren) though we have not, nor must expect, particular predictions, or signs given us of destructive judgments, yet a wise observer and comparer of God's word and works together may be able to discern what is likely to come upon the place wherein he liveth. It is Solomon's general assertion, Prov. xxii. 3, 'The prudent man foreseeth the evil;' this being that which every spiritually wise man may attain to in some measure, and accordingly ought to endeavour after. Now the best means of obtaining this

\* Joseph. Antiq.

\* James Nayler.

## SERMON XLVII.

*They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.—1 JOHN II. 19.*

THE gospel had no sooner ascended the horizon of the Gentiles, and dispelled that universal shade wherein they had been benighted, but the prince of the air raised the clouds, or rather fogs and mists, of heresy, to obscure the lustre thereof. No sooner had those apostolical merchants erected factories in several parts of the world, for the advancement of Christian religion, but the devil had his emissaries in all places to interrupt the trade of truth. This our apostle well knew, and therefore armeth those to whom he wrote both against the peril and the scandal of antichristian teachers. When the market is full of adulterous wares, counterfeit coins, specious falsehoods, there is great danger of being deceived, and therefore it concerneth us to be so much the more careful what wares

foresight is to observe what have been the signs and forerunners of God's judgments on other nations, especially those in holy writ, as in particular concerning Jerusalem; and if we find the like to befall in our days, we may thence, if not undoubtedly, yet rationally, conclude our own destruction to be at hand. Among others, there were two very observable signs of Jerusalem's destruction: the one, great 'wars and rumours of wars;' the other, multitudes of false Christs and false prophets. And as we have for many years felt the one, so who doth not see the other? We need not go to Rome to find out antichrist, we have swarms of antichrists among ourselves; so that this age, and land, and city of ours is become a sink of filthy and loathsome heresies, yea, which is the worst kind of antichristianism, Pseudochristianism is the brand of our times, whilst all these antichrists pretend themselves to be the only Christians, yea, some of them assert themselves to be Christified and deified; nay, one of them\* is so sacrilegiously impudent as to style himself the Christ. What Christian heart bleeds not to hear of these heresies, blasphemies; and that, as chiefly because of the dishonour done to Christ, so secondarily of that sad presage which they give of the mournful downfall of this once flourishing church, kingdom, and city. But I would not be a prophet of misery to my native country, yea, I should be glad to prove a false prophet; and therefore, instead of a doleful prediction, I shall close up with an earnest supplication, that all these antichrists may be either reclaimed or suppressed, that the orthodox faith may be maintained, the church restored, our wars ended, our sins reformed, and so our ruin prevented. Amen!

and commodities we take, what doctrines we receive as true. When the brats of ugly errors are laid at the door of the Christian church, Satan's design is to bring her in disgrace, and men are too apt to fancy her the mother of such monsters; great reason there is to take heed we be not offended, yea, through our incoherent precipitancy, stumble and fall at this block. The prevention of the former of these, namely, the danger, is the design of our apostle in the precedent verse, and now in this verse he goeth on to remove the scandal, letting the Christians know, that 'they went out from, but they were not of' them; 'for if they had been,' &c.

In the words these two particulars are plainly considerable:

The *occasion* and the *remotion* of the scandal.

The *occasion* of offence, set down in these words, 'They went out from us.'

The *remotion* of this, as being no just cause, in the rest of the words, 'But they were not of us,' &c.

Begin we with that which first occurreth, to wit, the occasion of the offence, 'They went out from us;' in which words there is something implied, and something expressed.

1. That which these words imply, as Calvin, Danaeus, with others, observe, is, that those antichristian impostors had been in the bosom of the church, and embraced the Christian profession. Thus we read of Simon Magus, Acts viii. 6, one of the chief ringleaders, that he 'believed and was baptized'; and Nicolaus was one of those seven deacons upon whom the apostle laid hands; and Epiphanius affirmeth Cerinthus\* to have been very conversant with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; and St Paul tells the pastors of Ephesus, Acts xx. 30, that 'men speaking perverse things should arise of their own selves;' so that in this case that often falls out, 'a man's enemies are those of his own household.' The church's seeming members prove her worst enemies. 'As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters,' saith Christ of his spouse, Cant. ii. 2; where it is observed by St Austin,† that it is not said among strangers,—that were no great wonder,—but among her daughters, even they who profess the church to be their mother, prove thorns to vex her, not only they who are without (to wit, the pale of the church), as having never received the Christian faith, such as were Jews and Pagans, but many who are within, become false brethren. Not only the wild boar out of the forest endeavours to lay waste God's vineyard, but there are foxes within to pluck off and spoil its grapes; nay, as St Austin well observes,‡ *multa foris oves, multi intus lupi*, many without are sheep, such as belong to, and are at last brought into, the fold; while many within are wolves, though in sheep's clothing, whose aim is to deceive and destroy. Even in Jerusalem, that is, the church (saith Origen§), are many Jebusites; in God's field there want no tares sown by the envious man. The visible church is as a net, wherein are bad as well as good fish; a garden, wherein are weeds as well as flowers; as Rebekah's womb, in which are two sorts of people struggling, to wit (as St Austin moraliseth it ||), spiritual and carnal. In one word, to use St Paul's comparison, 2 Tim. ii. 17, 20, in this house of the church there are as 'golden and silver,' so 'earthen and wooden vessels,' of which sort were Hymeneus and Philetus.

To end this, therefore, it is a consideration which in-

\* Epiph. Hær. xxviii.

† Non dictum est in medio alienarum sed in medio filiarum.—Aug. in Ps. xxxix.

‡ Aug. in Joh. ser. xlv.

§ Orig. in Josh. hom. ii.

|| Aug. quæst. super Gen. lxxiii. et Ser. de Temp. lxxviii.

deed may be matter of sorrow, that there should be such chaff among the wheat, such Canaanites among the people of Israel, such vipers in the bowels of the church; but yet it is no more than what hath been in all ages. God in wisdom permits it, the devil in malice contriveth it, that antichristian teachers should grow up among the Christians. *Non mirandum quod exsurgant, sed vigilandum ne noccant*, is St Austin's excellent advice; wonder not that they do arise, beware that they do not hurt; and though they are mingled with us, let us take heed we be not partakers with, and so infected by, them.

2. But that which is here expressed, and would chiefly be considered, is, that these antichristian teachers 'went out from' the apostles; for the unfolding whereof I shall discuss these two things:

What this going out imports.

Whence it comes to pass.

1. The first question to be resolved is, What this going out imports? To which end observe,

(1.) It is one thing to go out by virtue of a commission, and another thing to go out in a way of desertion. We read of the king, Mat. xxii. 9, that he 'sent his servants,' and bid them go out into the high ways,' to wit, to invite guests to the wedding. Thus did the apostles go forth from Christ, as being sent by him to preach the gospel. But in this sense it cannot be here understood, as if these antichrists went forth commissioned from the apostles, because that to these words, 'they went out from us,' are opposed those, 'they would have continued with us.' Now *continuing* with the apostles, if taken in opposition to *going out* from them with commission, had been a crime, and would have deserved that check, Why stand you idle? Whereas nothing clearer than that this continuing with them is here intended, as that which was their duty to have done, and consequently the going out can bear no other sense than their forsaking the apostles.

(2.) It is one thing to *be cast out*, and another to *go out*; the former is a punishment or censure of the church, consisting of various degrees, according to the quality of offences, some being cast out *è catu participantium*, of the number of the communicants; others not only so, but *è catu procumbentium*, from prayers, as well as sacraments; others *è catu audientium*, nay, *fidelium*, not suffered so much as to hear the word, or to converse with the faithful. These censures (though none more deserve them than those my text speaks of) may for some gross misdemeanours be inflicted on those who yet are true members of the church. Indeed, this judicial casting out is that which is done by the governors of the church, not only as an act of justice, but merey, with charitable and compassionate intentions, that the casting out may prove the casting down of the delinquent; and that casting down may tend to the raising up, and receiving in again of the penitent. But this going out is the act of wicked apostates, a



sin of a very deep dye, and heinous nature; nor can they who thus cast themselves out ever call themselves in, yea, they are seldom, if ever, called in again.

(3.) This sin of apostasy in going out from the church is committed two ways,\* viz. by heresy and schism, a going out from the *faith* and from the *fellowship* of the church. Indeed, heresy and schism, like abortive twins, in many particulars are coincident; and, like Jacob and Esau, one holds fast by the other's heels. Heresies in point of faith do easily produce a separation in the use of ordinances and forms of worship. So the Arian heresy brought in a different doxology; and schism, in point of communion, frequently inducteth into heretical doctrines, *ut rectè ab ecclesiâ discessisse videantur*, as St Jerome excellently, that the schismatic may thereby the better maintain his unlawful separation; and by both these ways did the antichrist go out.

[1.] They went out, that is, they apostatised from the faith which was once delivered, and had been by them professed. That expression of the apostle, Acts xiv. 27, 'the door of faith,' intimateth that faith is the door of the church; so that, by embracing, we enter in; by deserting the faith, we go out of the church. Thus St Paul says of Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Tim. ii. 19, 20, that 'concerning the faith they made shipwreck;' that is, as mariners in a storm cast their wares overboard, so did they cast away the orthodox doctrine of Christianity. Such were those whom the apostle Peter, 2 Peter ii. 1, chargeth for 'bringing in damnable heresies,' destructive to the fundamentals of religion and the salvation of the people, against whom, therefore, the apostle Jude, ver. 3, exhorteth sincere Christians to contend earnestly.

[2.] They went out, that is, they departed from the fellowship of the apostles,† with whom they had held communion before. Having endeavoured to deprave the church's truth by heresy, they disturb the peace by schism, rending themselves from that body of which they professed themselves members. Such were those some whose manner, St Paul tells us, Heb. x. 15, was to 'forsake the assembly;' and this is one of those brands which St Jude, ver. 19, marketh the false teachers with, that they did 'separate themselves,' not willing to be confined within the limits and bounds of the church's communion.

(4.) Once more, this phrase, 'they went out from us,' is a *μίσωσις*, more being intended than is expressed; not only that they went out from, but that being gone out, they did set themselves against the church; and therefore he calls them in the former verse, *antichrists*, which is far more than *apostates*. Their separation was not only negatively a non-communion, but positively a direct opposition; gathering to themselves parties, erecting, as it were, a church against a church, an altar against an altar, they did not only

\* *Pelluntur excommunicati, schismatici discedunt, heretici exeunt.—Lor.* † Jerom. ad Tit. cap. iii.

forsake their colours, but did fight under the enemies' banner, and charge desperately in their forlorn. In one word, not only a *falling from* the doctrine and communion, but a *rising against* both, through an internal malicious detestation, is that which is the extent of the accusation which our apostle intends by these words, 'They went out from us.'

2. The next question which would be resolved is, How this came to pass that these schismatical heretics went out from the church? Nor need we go further for an answer than the foregoing verses, where the apostle first dehorts in general from the love of the world, and particularly from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; all of which we shall find to have a great influence upon antichristian apostates.

(1.) They went out from the church, because they loved the world. It was St Paul's charge against Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'He hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.' That heart which is tenacious of the world, will easily let go his hold of truth. Our apostle saith a little before, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him:' it is as true, the love of his mother (the church) is not in him. Indeed, in the primitive times, it so fell out that, by reason of persecution, they could not cleave to the church, unless they were willing to leave the world; and no wonder if the love of the world caused many of them to leave the church.

(2.) But, more particularly,

[1.] The lust of the flesh was a special cause of their apostasy; the church's bounds were too narrow, her laws too strict for those licentious antichrists. Indeed, it is frequently observable, that the great rabbis against the church are extraordinary chaplains to the trencher. St Paul, describing those false teachers, saith, Rom. xvi. 18, they were such as did 'serve their own bellies;' nay more, Philip. iii. 17, 'whose god is their belly.' St Peter, 2 Peter ii. 10, 13, 14, 18, characteriseth them to be such as did 'count it a pleasure to riot in the day-time, having eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin;' such as did 'allure through the lust of the flesh,' through much wantonness. In a word, he compareth them to dogs and swine, and calls them, 'the servants of corruption.' Finally, St Jude, ver. 19, affirmeth of those separatists, that they were 'sensual;' so great affinity hath epicurism with antichristianism, and sensuality with heresy.

[2.] The lust of the eyes (and that in both notions) is no less an incentive of this sinful departure. For,

1. Curiosity hath ever been a nurse of error. *Prurigo sciendi scabies ecclesie*, the itch of knowing more than we should, proveth too often an heretical scab. When men are not content with truths revealed, no wonder if they wander into bypaths, and lose themselves in a maze of folly. *Melior est fidelis ignorantia quam temeraria scientia*, was a good saying of the mas-

ter of the sentences;\* a modest ignorance is better than a presumptuous knowledge. As we must not be too credulous in receiving what is delivered, so neither curious in prying into what is concealed; it is not seldom seen, that as Thales, gazing on the stars, fell into a pit, so men that meddle with divine secrets, fall into the pit of error.

[2.] But that which hath ever proved the most usual source of apostasy is avarice. Observe the apostolical character of the antichristian teachers, and you shall still find this to be one. 'They are destitute of the truth' (saith St Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. vi. 8); 'supposing that gain is godliness.' And again, chap. v. ver. 10, 'The love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith.' 'They teach things which they ought not' (saith the same apostle to Titus, chap. i. 11), 'for filthy lucre's sake.' 'Through covetousness, they with feigned words make merchandise of you' (saith the apostle Peter, 2 Peter ii. 3); and again, ver. 14, 15, 'An heart they have exercised with covetous practices, which have forsook the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.' Thus Ignatius,† St John's contemporary, complained of some, that they were *ὁὐ χριστιανὸι ἀλλὰ χριστέμποροι*, rather merchants of Christ than Christians indeed, carrying about the name of Christ fraudulently, handling the word of Christ deceitfully, mingling with smooth words poisonous errors. Thus St Cyprian ‡ accused that apostatising heretic Novatus, of whom he saith, that he was *avaritia inexplebili rapacitate furibundus*, not only covetous but ravenous, and insatiably greedy of gain. And Isidorus § observing, that the Novatians styled themselves *the pure*, saith, *Mundanos se potius quam mundos vocarent*, they should have called themselves, not *puritans*, but *mammonists*. And however the antichristian apostates of our age have other pretences, to wit, of purity and godliness, yet whoso diveth into the bottom of their departure from the church, shall find it to be the enriching themselves, especially with the sacrilegious spoils of her lands and revenues. It is a notable saying of Sallust concerning avarice, || that it subverts fidelity and honesty, it teacheth men to neglect God, and make sale of everything; and what he found true in the commonwealth we may in the church, that the love of gain causeth men to renounce the faith, and they stiek not to sell their religion, their consciences, their souls for money.

(3.) Add to the two former, that which must by no means in this case be left out, as having a great hand in it, namely, the pride of life, ¶ and that double.

\* P. Lomb. lib. i. Dist. 41.

‡ Cypr. ad Novat.

† Ignat. Ep. ad Trall.

§ Isid. Orig. 6, 8.

|| *Avaritia fidem et probitatem subvertit, ac Deum negligere et omnia venalia habere docuit.*—*Sal. de conj. Catil.*

¶ *Mater omnium hæreticorum superbia.*—*Aug. Epi. 165.*

[1.] An arrogant self-conceit too often causeth men to depart from the church. One sort of the heretics in the apostles' time were the Gnostics, who were so called from their vain affectation and opinion of their own knowledge. No wonder if St Paul's advice, Rom. xii. 3, is 'not to think of our own selves more highly than we ought.' It is the observation of the reverend and learned Hooker,\* that the chief cause of those heresies which infected the eastern church was the restless wits of the Grecians, evermore proud of their own curious and subtle inventions, which, having once contrived, they knew how plausibly to vent; and Eusebius informeth us of that fore-mentioned heretic Novatus, † that he was a man blown up with pride and self-conceit; and Vincentius Lyrinensis of Nestorius, ‡ that such was his *scelerata presumptio*, daring boldness, as to boast himself the first and only man. Thus do heretics and schismatics go out from, because they account themselves above, others, above fathers, councils, antiquity, authority, church, Scriptures, all, according to that proud speech of Abailardus, § *Omnes alii sic, ego autem non sic*, all others think thus, but I think not so.

[2.] An haughty desire of honour and greatness, which, because they cannot obtain in the church, they seek after by going out of it. That *ἄξχητος ἀγισσεως* (as Eusebius calls him ||), ringleader of heresy, Simon Magus, would be *τις μέγας*, some great one, Acts viii. 10, and therefore broached those hellish doctrines. Diotrephes 'loved the pre-eminence,' and that opens his mouth in prating against St John, 3 John 10. It were easy to instance in Donatus, Arius, and others, who, aspiring after dignities, and being discontented, the one that Cecilian, bishop of Carthage, the other that Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, were preferred into those seats which they aimed at, did thereupon desert the catholic church. Look, as through ambition it was that the devil himself 'stood not in the truth,' so he still carrieth his instruments to this pinnacle, whence he throweth them down into errors.

And thus I have given you a brief portraiture both of the crime and its causes of which these antichrists are accused: 'they went out from us.'

This heinous charge is that which the papists at this day draw up against us, because we have deserted them, condemning us as heretics, schismatics, apostates, and such as have forsaken the communion of the Christian, catholic, and apostolic church. But how causeless and unjust this accusation is, hath been both of old and latter days so abundantly discovered by many learned pens, as that I shall not need to enlarge; only give me leave in a few words to let you see how vast a difference there is between our going

\* Hook. Eccles. pol. v. cap. ix.

‡ Bern. Ep. 190.

† Euseb. Histor. lib. ii. cap. xiii.

|| Euseb. l. d.

‡ Vincent. Lyr. c. 42.



out from them, and the going out of these heretics from the apostles.

1. These antichrists, in going out from the apostles and their followers, went out from the whole Christian church that had been planted by them in several parts; whereas we, in going out from the Roman, go out only from a particular church. I well knew the papists proudly arrogate to themselves the title of Catholic, but without the least show of reason; nay, it is with as great absurdity, as if a man should say a part, nay a less part, is the whole; the number of Christians being far greater which reneunceth, than that which embraceth the popish doctrine.

2. These antichrists, in going out from the apostles, went out from those ecclesiastical governors to whom they owed subjection; but we owe no obedience to the bishop of Rome, and therefore have justly cast off his yoke.

Indeed, he most presumptuously assumeth to himself the title of *universal bishop*, and maketh himself the *vicar of Christ*, upon the account that he is the successor of St Peter. But as it is no way to be evinced from Scripture that St Peter had any more power communicated to him than what the other apostles had, so neither can any reason be given why this power (if granted to St Peter) should be derived to his successor at Rome rather than at Antioch; nay, why it should not have devolved from him to the apostle St John, who outlived him, and so to his successors. That this universal power, therefore, belongs not to him of right is manifest, and it is no less clear that, *de facto*, it was never exercised by any Roman bishop for more than six hundred years after Christ, Boniface the Third being the first who obtained of that wicked emperor Phocas\* the title of universal bishop.

And whereas the pope claimeth a peculiar right to our obedience upon the score of having planted Christianity amongst us, and having had a concession of it from some kings: to the former it is answered, that this island was converted to the faith of Christ long before Augustine's preaching to the Saxons, either by Joseph of Arimathea or Simon Zelotes, as our annals tell us; and secondly, that though Augustine, whom the pope sent over, had been the means of our conversion, yet that is no argument for our subjection to the pope; for by the same reason, all the nations converted by St Paul and his ministry are in all ages obliged to be subject to that chair where St Paul sat at the time of his sending out, or going himself, to convert them; which, as it hath no truth in itself, so would it be very prejudicial to St Peter's pastorship. To the latter it is returned, that either this power of that concession was so originally vested in our kings, that they might lawfully grant it to whom they pleased, and then, as one king conceded it, another may recall it; or else if it were not, then was the grant invalid,

\* Masson. in vit. Bonif.

and being but a robbery in the giver, can devolve no right to the receiver. By all which it appeareth that we have made no schism in withholding obedience from the pope.

3. Chiefly; these antichrists, in going out from the apostolical, went out from a pure church, in which there neither wanted sound doctrine nor good discipline; but we, in going out from the papists, go out from a church degenerated, and polluted with damnable heresies. To clear this, know,

(1.) That when any church or number of Christians are grown so corrupt a body, and so far infected that we cannot communicate with it without manifest sin, we not only *may*, but *ought* to go out from them. Indeed, it is necessary both by virtue of that precept which calls upon God's people to come out from Babylon, and likewise as a means of preservation from that contagion we otherwise must needs receive; so that it is as needful to separate from such a church in order to the soul's safety, as it is for a man to go out of an infected house, or abstain from a leper's company, in order to his bodily health.

(2.) That the church of Rome, at that time when we went out from her, was, and still continueth, a very corrupt church. Many of her doctrines directly contrary to the Scriptures, not heard of in the primitive church, yet imposed as articles of faith; her worship superstitious, ridiculous, incongruous to right reason, apostolical practice, yea, divine precept, and yet pressed as necessary to be performed; by which means it is that they put upon us the sad dilemma of going from their communion, or going against the clear light of divine truth shining from God's word upon our consciences; in which respect we justly say, *they*, not *we*, have made the separation, and so the schism lieth at their door.

To shut it up; what St Austin said to the Donatists, we say to the Romanists, *Tollatur paries erroris, simul sumus*, let the partition wall of imposing unreasonable opinions and practices upon us be taken away, and we are ready to unite with them. We divide not from them as they are a part of, but so far as they are divided from, the catholic church. We have done our part in reforming ourselves, and it is their fault that upon this followeth a breach of communion with them who will not reform. They, not we, are gone out from the ancient primitive and apostolical church, in which respect they are justly termed antichristian; nor do we any further go out from them than in those things wherein they are gone forth from the apostles. When Jeroboam, with others of the children of Israel, revolted from their lawful king and God's instituted worship, some of the priests, Levites, and others, left their habitation, and went to Judah, that they might serve God and their king. Surely not those who went, but those who stayed, were the rebels and the schismatics. Thus are the Romanists guilty for leaving the footsteps of the apostles, not we for leaving theirs

to follow the apostles. Finally, we still hold communion with them *in votis*, earnestly desiring that those just causes they have given of our non-communion with them, by their pope's usurpation of supremacy and infallibility, by their superstitious innovations both in matters of doctrine and practice, may be removed; and to this end, that a general council might be lawfully called, and freely act, to whose determination we are willing to submit, and therefore can acquit ourselves from schism in the sight of God and man.

But whilst the papists unjustly revile the church of England, I am sure *she* hath had cause of weeping over the multitudes of those who in this apostatising age have gone out from her. How justly may she take up a complaint in God's own language, Isa. i. 2, 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.' They that have been baptised in her font, educated by her pastors, and sucked what knowledge and grace they have (if yet they may be said to have any) from her breasts, have now forsaken her, yea, are risen up against her, viper-like eating out her bowels. Oh what sad breaches have been made in the doctrine and discipline of the church by those wild beasts (Socinians, Familists, Anabaptists, Quakers, and such like), who being made to go out of the field, have trampled down the hedge, endeavouring to lay all waste!

And now, I would to God that all sectaries would at length sadly consider these two things, how causeless, yea, how cursed, this their departure from the church of England is.

1. How causeless their going out is were easy to make appear by an induction of the several particulars which are alleged as pretences, such as are infant baptism; episcopal ordination and jurisdiction; administration of the Lord's supper to all baptized persons of age, not convicted of any scandalous offences (which they call mixed communion); as also those harmless, yea, useful, because significant, ceremonies which our church retained: all which (though by them declaimed against as popish) will be found, upon due inquiry, some of them apostolical, all of them ancient institutions and practices of the catholic Christian church; though yet, should we grant some of them to be pollutions and spots in our church, it would only infer a lawful desire and endeavour of reformation, not warrant a schismatical separation, since no corruptions in any church can give allowance of going out of it, unless they be such as strike at the very foundation of Christian doctrine and worship. It may perhaps be here pleaded, that as we forsook the communion of the Roman church, because we apprehended it guilty of such erroneous doctrines and practices, with which we could not communicate without sin, so do the sectaries upon the same apprehension of the like in our church, forsake ours; and therefore,

if *their* separation from *us* be causeless, *ours* from the *papists* may seem to be as unjust.

But to this we return, that neither have we given them the like cause, as the church of Rome gave us, nor have they the like rational conviction as we had. We impose nothing to be believed in doctrine as necessary to salvation which we do not demonstrate to have been the doctrine of Christ and his apostles and the catholic church, and so ought to be believed; we require nothing to be done in matter of practice which is not of ancient usage in the Christian church, and in its own nature is at least indifferent, and so may be done without sin; and therefore it is not a just conviction, but at best a deceiving persuasion, at worst a wilful resolution, which causeth their separation, and so it is in truth causeless.

2. Add to this that other consideration, namely, how cursed it is, which is evident in several respects.

(1.) Of Christ and his Spirit, who is hereby grieved. It is very observable, that they who are said in this verse to go out from the apostles are called in the verse before antichrists. Whilst we go from Christ's church we go against Christ, and by rending from his body we grieve his Spirit; and therefore St Ambrose calls schism a *siu* against the Holy Ghost.

(2.) Of the church, which is hereby weakened. The taking of any stones out of the building lesseneth the strength of the whole fabric. If one soldier break his rank, the whole company is disordered by it. Thus do they who go out of the church ruin the church itself, interrupting her unity, which is at once her strength and beauty. Upon this account it is well observed, that whereas other sins are *contra singulos*, against particular persons, this of schism is *contra universos*, against a generality, so that, as much as community is above a person, so much is schism above other sins; yea, as much as a sacred is better than a civil command, so much this sin is worse than that of sedition.

(3.) Of others, inasmuch as by this means,

[1.] Those that are malicious enemies against the church have their mouths opened to calumniate her, and all that are strangers without the church are hindered from coming into her. Clemens Alexandrinus repeateth the saying of one to this purpose,\* who cried out, You Christians have so many sects, let my soul be with the philosophers.

[2.] Those who are within the church, inasmuch as some (to wit, the weak) are staggered, and ready to question which is the true church, nay, whether there be any church at all; and others (to wit, the strong,) are sadded, whilst 'for these divisions of Reuben are great searchings of heart.'

(4.) Lastly, of themselves, who by their backsliding separation hasten upon themselves perdition. A branch plucked from the root must needs wither, a member cut off from the body dies, and those that leave the

\* Cl. Al. Pædag.



church perish. *Nos tentat Diabolus ut lupus ovem a grege*, saith St Cyprian,\* as the wolf tempts the sheep from the fold, so doth the devil men from the church; and why this, but that he may worry and devour them? *Diseedentes ab ecclesia* (saith Irenæus†) *de fonte Spiritus sancti non potant*, they that leave the garden of the church cannot drink of the fountain of the Spirit. What became of those who were out of the ark when the flood came? They must needs perish in the waters. No less miserable is their condition who go out of the church.

Yea, which renders their condition so much the more desperate is, that they who once go out of the church do seldom return to it. That of the poet, *Quis peccandi sibi finem posuit*, is as true *errandi*, both sin and errors are boundless; in this respect among others, the wandering, as of sinners, so heretics, is like that of a lost sheep, which strayeth from pasture to pasture, but never of itself goeth back to the fold. The path of error is a going down hill, in which men go, nay, run, from error to error, till at last they fall into the pit of destruction.

And now (my brethren) think, I beseech you, that the church of England bespeaketh you this day in those words of our Saviour upon a like occasion, John vi. 67, 68, 'Will you also go away?' Nor can we

\* Cypr. de Uni. Eccles.

† Iræn. adv. Hær.

return a better answer than that which St Peter, in behalf of himself and the rest, gave to Christ, 'Whither shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.' In this church is the orthodox dispensation of the gospel, the faithful administration of the sacraments, and the primitive apostolical discipline established, and therefore whither shall we go? Here it is that Christ feedeth his flock in green pastures, by still waters; why should we be as they that turn aside? Oh let us pity the seduced multitude, who have left churches for conventicles, judicious preaching for ignorant prating, their learned pastors for illiterate mechanics, and their true baptism in the font for a vain dipping in a pond; yea, let us not only weep over but pray for them (as our mother the church hath taught us in her excellently composed Litany), that God would bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived. However, if they will not return to us, let us take heed we go not forth to them; rather let us bless God, that hath caused our lot to fall within the bosom of so pure a church, and let us earnestly beseech him to strengthen us by his grace, that we may continue in her communion to the end. So may we confidently and comfortably take up those words of the author to the Hebrews, chap. x. 39, 'But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.'

### SERMON XLVIII.

*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*—1 JOHN II. 19.

THAT general assertion of God himself by the prophet Isaiah, chap. lv. 8, 'My ways are not as your ways, neither are my thoughts as your thoughts,' is not unfitly exemplified in the state of the militant church. Our thoughts are, that the church of God, even on earth, should be without spot or wrinkle, without fear of danger; that God's house should neither be infected with the contagion of error nor infested with the breach of schism; that Christ's flock should be securely free from wolves, or, though the sheep be among wolves, yet that there should be no goats among the sheep. But see how far distant God's thoughts are from ours, who so ordereth it, that the church's splendour here below shall not be like that of the sun, but the moon, borrowed and imperfect; that her condition should be like that of a ship tossed with the waves of persecution, yea, sometimes like the earth, rent asunder with the wind of division. And surely, to use St Paul's expression, 1 Cor. i. 25, 'The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man,' and therefore let us give him leave to know what is fitter for his church than we. Far be it from us to repine at his purposes because

they agree not with our projects; rather let us subscribe to the prudence of his determinations, as in governing the world, so in ordering his church, whilst for excellent and admirable ends he permitteth heretical and schismatical apostates to obscure her doctrine and disturb her peace: a pregnant instance whereof we find in the primitive church, even whilst St John lived, by reason of those many antichrists which did arise, concerning whom he saith here, 'They went out from us, but they were not of us,' &c.

Having despatched the concession which intimateth what was the occasion of the scandal, 'they went out from us,' pass we on to the correction, which removeth that occasion, by discovering it to be no just cause, and that two ways.

1. By a negation, in respect of the persons who went out, that indeed they never were members of the church; which is

Asserted in those words, 'but they were not of us;' Proved in those, 'for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.'

2. By an affirmation, which declareth that the going out of those antichrists was permitted by God for a

very good end, to wit, that they might appear to be but hypocrites: 'but they went out, that it might be manifest they were not all of us.'

1. Begin we with the negation. And before I enter upon the particulars, I cannot but take notice of that injurious interpretation which Socinus puts upon this clause,\* on purpose to evade that argument which is drawn hence for the doctrine of perseverance, and amounts to this sense, that whereas these antichrists, though gone out of the church, might pretend that they were still of the same faith with the apostles, St John lets them know, that though they had been, yet now (to wit, a little before, or about the time of their going out from them), they were not of them, of which their leaving communion with them was a sufficient argument.

In opposition to which interpretation, I shall offer these three things.

(1.) It doth not appear, nor is it probable, that these antichrists, when gone out from the apostles, did still pretend to the orthodox faith; and therefore no need for the apostle to make any provision against it. Nay, it is plainly intimated by the following discourse, that these antichrists being gone forth, did set themselves expressly, directly, against the orthodox, denying that Jesus, whom they did profess, to be the Christ; and therefore the design of this clause is most rationally conceived to be the prevention of that scandal which their horrid apostasy might give to weak Christians; nor could anything more effectually prevent or remove it, than to let them know that these antichristian apostates were never true stars in the firmament of the church, but only blazing comets, as their falling away did evidently demonstrate.

(2.) That the words, 'they were not of us,' import an absolute denial; so that to put a limitation is to put a sense upon them; and if that which this interpretation offereth were the apostle's meaning, it had been more proper for him to have said, because they ceased to be of us, than to say, 'they were not of us.' Nor will that slender grammar-prop of the preter-imperfect tense support this gloss, nothing being more usual, than even by that tense to take in the whole time past. And look as when a man speaking of any place, saith, *I was not there*, he is understood to mean, not that he was not there just before, or that when he left the place he was not there, but that he was not there at all; so when our apostle saith, 'they were not of us,' his meaning doubtless is not, they were not of us at the time when they left us, but they were not at all of us.

(3.) That if this which he pretends were the apostle's meaning, the addition of a reason to confirm it were supervacaneous, it being as needless to prove that these antichrists were not, about the time when they deserted the apostles, of the same spirit and faith with them, as to prove, that they who run from their

\* Socin. in loc.

colours were not, just as they run away, of the same mind and for the same cause with those who valiantly fight.

Having thus blown away that light and empty exposition, come we now to handle the clause, as it is both generally and rationally interpreted. To this end consider we the negation.

(1.) As asserted in those words, 'But they were not of us.'

For the right understanding of which clause, it will not be amiss to make use of that distinction of Zanchy between these two phrases,\* *esse in, et de ecclesia*, to be *in* the church, and to be *of* it, the former being of a far larger extent than the latter, since, though all that are of the church are in it, yet all that are in the church are not of it. All that take upon them the profession of the true Christian faith, and communicate with the visible society of the faithful in evangelical administrations, are justly said to be *in* the church; only they, who being before all times graciously elected, are in due time effectually called, and so united to Christ by a lively faith, to their fellow-Christians by a cordial love, are truly said to be *of* the church. This will the better appear by taking notice of another phrase, which we meet with in this very epistle, namely, to be 'of the world,' *aliud est esse in mundo, aliud esse de mundo*.† There is a vast difference between these two, to be *in* the world and *of* it. All who live, and move, and have their being in the world, are said to be *in* it; only those who delight in, and set their hearts on the world, are said to be *of* it. Look, then, how good Christians are said to be in the world, and yet not of it, so wicked antichrists may be said to be in the church, but not of it, no, not even whilst they continue in it; for that no doubt is our apostle's design, to acquaint us that, even before they went out, whilst yet they were among, they were not of them, according as St Austin excellently glosseth,‡ *quando videbantur in nobis, non erant ex nobis*, when they seemed to be, they were not of us.

Look, as on the one hand it may be said of many who are not among us, they are yet of us, because their names are written in the book of life; in which sense Paul was of the church, whilst a persecutor against it, because 'a chosen vessel, separated (as he saith himself, Gal. i. 15) from his mother's womb;' so, on the other hand, it may be said of many who are among us, they are not of us, *quia non erant in Christo electi ante mundi constitutionem*, saith St Austin,§ because they are not eternally elected, not effectually converted.

Indeed, to use Spalatensis his phrase,|| they may be said to be *de ecclesiâ præsumptivè, sed non realiter, non veraciter*, of the church in their own and others' opinion, but they are not so really. So long as they

\* Zanch. in loc. † Aug. l. de Cor. et grat.

‡ Serrar. in loc. § Aug. l. de bono persever. cap. viii.

|| Spalat. lib. vii. cap. x.



outwardly profess the true faith, without open scandal, charity presumeth them to be of the church, but verity denieth them to be so.

The learned Davenant well argueth,\* nothing is that truly and formally, which it is said to be with the addition of a term of diminution, as a dead man is not a man, but a carcase. Now, wicked men, whilst yet in the bosom of the church, they are but dead members, branches in Christ, not bearing fruit, according to our Saviour's expression, John xv. 2. They are not *partes*, but *pestes*; not *membra*, but *mali humores*, so St Austin; † not parts, but pests of the church, not members of, but ill-humours in the body. Very apt to this purpose is that similitude which the same father borroweth from an house, in which there are rubbish and cobweb, ‡ but they are none of the materials which constitute the fabric of it. In one word, what St Austin saith concerning Judas, § *Unus erat numero non merito, specie non virtute, commixtione corporali non vinculo spirituali*, he was one of the apostles in number, not merit, by corporal conversation, not spiritual conjunction, that may no less justly be asserted of all hypocrites, of whom Bellarmine himself saith in St Austin's language, || *Ad ecclesiam pertinent numero non merito*, they fill up the number of visible professors, but want the reality of true believers. Thus as the Romans said of that traitor to the city, *Iste non est noster, non est Romanus, sed Pannus*, he is none of ours, he is not a Roman, but a Carthaginian; or as Homer of the cowardly Grecians, *'Αχαιῶδες οὐκ ἐστ' Ἀχαιοί*, O Grecians, you are not Grecians; so here the apostle, of degenerate Christians, they were no Christians, they were not of us, as being destitute of a true and genuine faith. And now, what should the consideration hereof teach us, but,

[1.] Not to content ourselves that we are received into the church by baptism, and partake of its external privileges. *Multi qui non ex nobis recipiunt sacramentum, &c.*, saith St Austin upon the place, many that are not of us do yet communicate with us. St Paul saith of a Jew, Rom. ii. 28, 'He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh.' The like may I say of a Christian, he is not a Christian that is one outwardly, nor is that baptism which is outward in the body. *Frustra miscetur catui sanctorum in templo manu facto qui submotus est à consortio Dei et ab universo corpore mystico Christi*, saith St Cyprian excellently; ¶ in vain is he joined to the society of visible professors, who is disjoined from Christ's mystical body, and hath not communion with God.

[2.] Not to be much offended when we see some

\* Davon. Deter. † Aug. in loc.  
 ‡ Aug. de Bapt. Contra. Donat. lib. vii. cap. x.  
 § Aug. tr. 21 in Johan.  
 || Bellarm de Gem. col. lib. i. cap. ii.  
 ¶ Cypr. de Duplici Martyr.

within the church going out of it. Indeed, it should be our grief, but not our scandal. Mourn we ought for their sin in going out from the church, but still so as to comfort ourselves with this meditation, they never were true members of the church. *Avolent quantum volent paleæ leves, cò purior massa frumenti in hordeum domini reponetur*, so Tertullian; \* let the light chaff fly away whither it will, the good corn will be laid up so much the purer in God's barn. *Quando evomuntur mali humores, releveratur eorum*, so St Austin; † when ill humours are vomited up, the stomach is eased, and the body relieved. The departure of wicked men from the church is like the flying away of the chaff, and the casting out of bad humours; and though it be a woful decision to them, it is a good riddance to the church; nor doth she lose any from her, but those who were never of her. The truth of which will more evidently appear, if we take a view of

(2.) The argument annexed, whereby this negation is proved, in those words, 'For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.' The strength of the proof is obvious to every capacity, that there will be no need to insist upon it; for if they who are of the church do continue in it, it must necessarily follow that they who do not continue, but go out of the church, wēre never of it. That therefore which we are a little to inquire into is the truth of the point, that they who are of the church do undoubtedly continue in it. It is a doctrine I shall have frequent occasion to discuss in my progress through this epistle, and therefore I shall so handle it as to reserve something to be said hereafter. For the present I shall propose and resolve these two queries.

How far, or in what sense, this is verified?

Upon what ground the truth of it is founded?

I. To unfold the meaning of the position, know,

(1.) That *continuing with us* is here to be construed in opposition, not to all going out, but that which is malicious and impenitent, for such was the apostasy of those antichrists. They who are of the church may be for a time seduced from the church, from her truth to error, from her unity to schism, but,

[I.] They go not out totally; though from a particular, yet not from the catholic church; though from some truths which are as superstructures, yet not from those which are at least fundamentally and absolutely necessary to salvation; and though perhaps sometimes they may doubt of them, yet not so as to deny them; or if sometimes out of fear and infirmity deny, yet not wilfully and resolvedly to oppose them. Those instances of Peter and Judas do very well illustrate the difference in this particular between the departure which is incident to a true Christian and an hypocrite. Peter, indeed, sadly apostatised, when he not only forsook but denied his Master, but it was against the bent of his heart, which was to profess

\* Tertul. do prescript. cap. iii.

† Aug. in loc.

Christ, though all others forsook him, as appeareth by his own expression. In which regard Tertullian saith of him, *fidei robur fuit concussum, non excussum, fides mota, non amota*, the strength of his faith was moved and shaken, but not the truth of it removed and thrown down; and St Gregory,\* that his faith, that herb of grace, was not withered, but rather trodden down with the foot of fear; and to the same purpose the Greek father,† though the wind of Satan's assault had blown down the leaves, the root was alive; whereas Judas betrayed his Master, out of a deliberate and wilful resolution, as appeareth by the contract he made about it beforehand. Thus whilst hypocrites wilfully make shipwreck of the faith, true believers are against their wills, through the violence of temptation, dashed upon a rock.

[2.] They go not out finally, so as never to return to the truth and unity of the church. *Vel raro cadunt, vel Dei beneficio resurgunt*, saith Danaeus,‡ they seldom fall into gross errors, and when they do, they rise again by repentance. Though these sheep may sometimes wander out of the fold, the shepherd brings them back again. Very suitable to this purpose is that allusion of St Cyprian to the dove and the crow,§ both of which went forth from the ark, but the dove returned, whereas the crow never did. The ark is a fit emblem of the church, the dove of a seduced catholic, and the crow of an obstinate heretic; and whereas the heretic, having left the church, goeth still downward to the gates of destruction, the catholic, though he may go out, returneth with prayers and tears. In this respect that observation of Cicero, concerning the Corinthian brass,|| that it doth not gather rust so soon as other, and is more easily scoured than other, is fitly applicable to the true members of the church, who are not presently withdrawn, and speedily recalled.

(2.) That continuing with us which is here asserted is to be understood, not in reference to their own strength, but divine power. They that are of the church, if left to themselves, would soon leave her. Temptations from the world and the devil are so frequent and violent, grace in the best so weak and defective, that were it not for that *manutenentia Dei*, God's upholding mercy, it were impossible they should not be drawn aside. Surely if the angels and Adam (who yet had no inherent corruption to bias them) soon left that state of integrity in which God created them, the best Christians (having the remainder of sin) must needs be more apt to turn aside from God; but saith the apostle Peter, 1 Peter i. 5, 'We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. That effectual grace, saith Austin,¶ *qua facit ut accedamus,*

*facit ne discedamus*, which causeth us to draw near, keepeth us from drawing back; so that, as in regard of our own weakness, it is impossible we should continue of ourselves, so in regard of divine power it is impossible but we should continue. By all which the meaning of our apostle in these words appeareth to be briefly this, that they who are true members of the church are undoubtedly so far preserved by God's power, that either they shall not go out, or if they do, they shall return, and so continue to the end.

This is that truth which is shadowed forth in the psalmist, Ps. i. 3, by the resemblance of 'a tree planted by the river of waters, which bringeth forth fruit in its season, whose leaf shall not fade;' in the Gospel, Mat. vii. 25, by the similitude of 'an house built upon the rock, which falls not though the winds blow, storms rage, and the waves beat against it.' We read concerning the temple of Solomon, that it was made of the wood of Lebanon, which (they say) never corrupts; upon which St Gregory thus moraliseth,\* *secundum præscentia sua gratiam, sanctam ecclesiam de in æternum permansuris sanctis constituit*, the materials of the spiritual temple are persevering saints; according to which is the promise of Christ to every true believer under the title of a conqueror, Rev. iii. 9, 'Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.'

2. Having unfolded the genuine sense of this position, it now remaineth that we inquire into the grounds upon which the truth of it is established, which we shall find to be four; two in regard of God, and two in regard of Christ.

(1.) In regard of God, the certain continuance of the true members of the church depends upon the love of his election, and the fidelity of his covenant.

[1.] It is impossible that any of those whom God hath from all eternity chosen to salvation should perish. Now, out of the church there is no salvation, and therefore it is impossible that they who are of the number of the faithful and chosen of God should utterly go out of the church. This is that which our Saviour himself, speaking of those false Christs and false prophets which should arise and shew great signs and wonders, intimateth as that which secureth true believers from being seduced by them, because they are elected; for when he saith, 'Inasmuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect,' he manifestly implieth that since they are elected, it is impossible that they should be deceived, to wit, so as utterly to renounce the Christian faith. Indeed, look as the passing of that bitter cup of the passion Mat. xxvi. 29, was impossible, not simply in itself, but in respect of God's decree, so the seduction of the elect to a total and final apostasy is, though very possible in respect of the devil's power and policy, of the elect's infirmities and corruptions, yet it is impossible in regard of God's decree to glorify them, and in order

\* Greg. Hom. 15 in Ezek.

† *καὶ τὸ φύλλα ἔβριψέ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ περιζώοντος, ἢ ῥίζα ζῆ.*—*Theoph. in Luc.*

‡ Dan. in loc. § Cypr. adv. Novat. Gen. viii. 7, 8.

|| Cic. Tuseul. i. ¶ Aug. de bono persever. cap. xii.

\* Greg. M. in l. i. Reg.



to that to preserve them. To this purpose is that of St Paul, who, having mentioned the woful apostasy of Hymenens and Philetus, 2 Tim. ii. 18, 19, presently addeth for the comfort of sincere believers, 'Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his,' whereby foundation is not improbably understood that decree of election which is unchangeable; and they who are his, that is, in a particular manner, as being known by him, are known to him, to wit, by a special knowledge, so as to take care of them, that they shall not make such a shipwreck of their faith as to sink into perdition.

2. The covenant which God hath made with the elect in Christ doth not only promise a reward to them which continue, but the grace of continuance; and not only the grace whereby they may continue, if they will, but that grace whereby they shall at once be both able and willing to continue. What can be clearer to this purpose than that of God by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxxii. 40, to the elect Jews, and in them to all his chosen, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Indeed, these last words, *they shall not*, are not directly according to the Hebrew, yet they express the sense, which can amount to no less than a certainty of the event; for since the grace of fear promised is a sufficient means of not departing, and the promise of putting his fear into them for that end argueth that it was his intention they should not depart, this event could not but infallibly be produced, inasmuch as divine intention, seconded with sufficient means to produce the effect, cannot possibly miscarry.

(2.) In regard of Christ, the certain continuance of all the true members of the church depends upon the energy of his death, and the efficacy of his intercession.

[1.] Though the design of Christ's death was in some respect general, namely, to purchase a possibility of salvation for all upon the conditions of faith and repentance, yet I doubt not to assert, that besides this there was a particular design of his death, which was to purchase a certainty of salvation by faith and repentance for some, to wit, the elect, this being the most rational way of reconciling those scriptures which do enlarge Christ's death to the whole world, with those that restrain it to his church.

Indeed, if there be not some who shall be actually saved by Christ's death, his death will be in vain. If there be not some for whom Christ hath purchased more than a possibility of salvation upon condition, it is possible none should be actually saved by it, especially if (as those who deny this peculiar intention affirm) the performing of the condition depends so on the liberty of our will, that notwithstanding the influence of grace a man may choose or refuse to do it; for then it is as possible that every man may not believe as that he may, and consequently it is possible no man may be

saved by Christ's death, and so Christ's death in vain, as to that which was its primary end, and consequently his intention frustrated. It remaineth, then, that as Christ intended his death to be sufficient for all, so that it might be efficient to some, in order to which it was necessary that for those persons he should purchase grace, yea, not only grace, but perseverance in grace till they come to glory.

[2.] Among those many things for which Christ intercedeth with the Father in behalf of his members, this is not the least, that they may be 'preserved to his heavenly kingdom,' and to that end that the Holy Spirit may be conferred on them. That prayer of Christ on earth, John xvii. 11, 15, 20, 24, is generally acknowledged as the sum of what he intercedeth for in heaven; and if you peruse it, you shall find him praying, not only for the apostles, but 'all that shall believe through their word,' that the Father would 'keep them, through his own name,' 'from the evil' (to wit, of this world), so as they may be 'with him where he is' (to wit, in heaven), 'and behold his glory.' That promise which Christ made to his disciples on earth John xiv. 16, he made good in heaven, 'I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.' Nor is this prayer made only for the apostles, but for the whole church, and every particular member, on whom, by virtue of Christ's intercession, the Spirit is in some measure bestowed; and that for this end, to be an exhorter, a comforter, an instructor, an upholder of them in the way till they come to the desired end. So that now, put all together, since all sincere members of the church are such whom God hath freely 'predestinated to salvation by sanctification,' and with whom he hath made a gracious covenant in Christ to give them grace and glory, since they are a purchased people, for whom Christ hath 'given himself to redeem them from all iniquity,' to bring them to felicity and glory; to which end, as he once shed his blood, so still he maketh intercession for them, and communicateth his Spirit to them; well might the apostle assert that 'if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.'

To apply this.

1. Do we see any who, having made (though never so glorious) profession of the truth, degenerate into blasphemous heresies and impieties, and utterly fall away, we need not fear to conclude that they never were what they seemed to be. If the seed which is cast into the ground do not fructify, we may safely infer it is not the good ground; if the house fall through the violence of the storms, we may truly deny that it was ever built upon the rock; if when the wind of persecution cometh, any professors vanish by an utter apostasy, we may justly assert that they were not wheat but chaff. It was our blessed Saviour's plain assertion, John viii. 31, 'If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed;' whereby is implied that total and final apostasy is an argument of

hypocrisy,\* and therefore, whereas it is said, 'many of his disciples went away from him,' Johu vi. 54, St Austin saith, *Discipuli appellantur, et tamen non erant verè discipuli; quia non manserunt in verbo ejus, secundum id quod ait, si manseritis in verbo meo, verè discipuli mei estis*, though they were called disciples, they were not so indeed, because they did not continue in Christ's word, according to that in the Gospel, 'If you continue in my word, you are my disciples indeed;' in reference to which it is that he saith a little after, *Tunc verò sunt quod appellantur, si manserint in eo propter quod sic appellantur*, then, and then only, are they that which they are called, Christ's disciples, if they abide in that for which they are so called.

2. Let all true members of the church rejoice in this comfortable doctrine. That phrase of St Paul, 'The grace of God wherein we stand,' Rom. v. 2, is taken notice of by St Chrysostom,† as very emphatical, *καλῶς ἔειπεν ἐστήκαμεν, ἢ γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάρις οὐκ ἔχει τέλος οὐκ ἴδιε πέρας*; very aptly it is said, we stand, for the grace of God knoweth no limits, hath no end; and whereas earthly dignities are quickly lost, because the favour of princes is changeable, yea, however, though none else, death will put a man out of the highest office; by the grace and favour of God we stand so fast, that nothing can wholly divest us of this glorious privilege, to be a member of the church. Herein it is that our estate by conversion is far better than Adam's by creation; he, indeed, was in a state of perfect purity, but withal in a state of mutability, and though placed in paradise, yet so as that he might, nay, did forfeit it, to the utter ejection of himself and his posterity. We being through regeneration grafted into Christ, attain by his grace, though not exact innocency, yet a kind of immutability, and are so planted in the garden of the church, that we cannot be plucked up.

This consideration is that which should enlarge our spiritual joy, but yet not diminish our prudential fear; and therefore we should do well (according to the psalmist's advice, Ps. ii. 9) to 'rejoice with trembling.' It is not to be denied but that this doctrine, being abused, may become to some an occasion of security, but withal it is only so to them whom it concerneth not, the false, not the true, members of the church; and it is only so because misunderstood, not in its own nature. Indeed, were this the doctrine, that they who are of the church shall continue in it, though they live never so loosely, and go on in their sin impenitently, it would be not only an occasion, but a cause of presumptuous security; but the intent of

\* Tentatio probat quia non sunt ex nobis, quando illis tentatio venerit, velut occasione venti volant foras quia grana non erant.—*Aug. in loc.* Nemo æstimet bonos de ecclesia posse discedere; triticum non rapit ventus, nee arborem solida radice fundatam procella subvertit. Inanes palææ tempestate jactantur, invalidæ arbores turbinis incursione everuntur; ex nobis exierunt sed non fuerunt ex nobis, &c.—*Cyp. l. de simplic. Prælat.*

† Chrysost. ibid.

this doctrine is only to assure those who are of the church, that through the Spirit of Christ, by the use of those means God affordeth, and exercise of those duties he requireth, they shall be so far preserved, as that either they shall not at all go out of, or if through the enemies' subtlety, and their own infirmity, and inanimadvertency, they are seduced, they shall at length return by Weeping-cross into the bosom of the church. And what place is here left for sloth and negligence, for presumption and security?

1. The truth is, it is no easy matter, on good ground, to assure ourselves that we are of the church. Many not only in others', but their own opinion, are of the church, and yet are not in reality; and if we be not indeed of the church, we cannot continue. In this respect that counsel of St Paul, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, is very needful, 'Examine, prove yourselves, whether you be in the faith,' use all diligence and faithfulness in searching out your spiritual estate.

2. If we be of the church, we are not so secured, but that we may fall scandalously, and for a time go out from her communion. Sad experience maketh it good at this day in many who have wretchedly forsaken the truth, and the church, for whose return we pray, and of which we are not altogether without hope, since we trust some of them are gone astray, not through wilfulness and contempt, but ignorance and weakness; and therefore not only 'he that thinketh he standeth,' but he that doth stand, had need to 'take heed lest he fall.'

3. Finally, there is no assurance of continuance to the true members of the church, but in the use of means. We are kept by God's power to salvation, but it is 'through faith,' and so likewise through fear and watchfulness, and humility, and obedience, and prayer, and attending on the word and sacraments; and therefore, they who are real Christians will not dare to neglect their duty, in a fond presumption of God's upholding mercy.

The sum of all is, our first work must be to make it sure on good grounds, that we are indeed members of the church. Being in some measure assured of that, our next care must be to apply ourselves to a conscientious use of all the ways and helps which may preserve us in it; and then, though still we must be diffident in regard of ourselves, as being conscious of our own impotency, yet, in regard of God, we may, we ought to be confident, that he 'who hath begun his good work in us, will perfect it to the day of Jesus,' Philip. i. 3, and having effectually called us into his church militant, that he will mercifully conduct us to his church triumphant.

2. Having despatched the negative, it now remaineth that we proceed to the other way of removing the scandal taken at the apostasy of these antichrists, to wit, the affirmative, which assigneth the end for which God permitted it: 'But they went out from us, that it might be manifested that they were not all of us.'



These words, 'they went out from us,' are not expressed in the original, but are necessarily implied, and therefore fitly supplied by the translator.

These words, 'they were not all of us,' seem 'to intimate, that *some* of these antichrists who went out were of us; but the true sense of that clause will be easily understood, if either, according to the Hebrew manner of speaking, we read *non omnis, nullus*, they were not all, that is, none of us; suitable to which is that of St Paul to the Romans, chap. iii. 20, fetched from David's Psalms, 'All flesh shall not be justified,' that is, no flesh; or if after *they* we add, *who were among us*, for so it amounts to this, that all who are joined to the society are not of the number of the faithful, and that they who were not so might be discovered, was the reason why God suffered them to go out. Congnous to this is St Austin's gloss upon this text, *Intus cum sint, non ex nobis sunt, non tamen manifesti, sed exeundo manifestantur*, whilst they were among us they were not of us, but they were not manifested till they went out; so that, by their going out, they did not so much fall away from what they were, as make known what they were not, and that they were far otherwise than what they seemed to be.

Indeed, there is a double manifestation which God aimeth at in permitting the apostasy of hypocrites.

1. The one of the sincere-hearted, that their integrity and constancy may the better appear. This St Paul asserts, where he saith, 1 Cor. xi. 19, 'there must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest.' That question of our Saviour to Peter and the rest, 'Will you also go away?' seemeth to intimate, that then, when so many went from him, was a time of discovering what metal they were made of, and then their true-heartedness to their master had an opportunity to shew itself. Had it not been for those heretical and schismatical apostates of old, those ancient fathers, both of the Greek and Latin church, had not been such illustrious stars in the firmament of the church; were it not for those of our latter days, and here among us, our church would not have had so much to glory of her Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Jewel, Whitaker, Whitgift, and the rest, who were so famous, in their generation, for their magnanimity in maintaining the truth against apostatical opposers.

2. The other of the false-hearted, who, by going out, shew themselves in their colours. This is that which divine providence bringeth about for a double end.

(1.) For the shame of themselves, *ut quod occultaverunt ingenium nudarent*, so Lorinus,\* that their evil disposition, which before lay hid, may be laid open to their disgrace. Whilst these men are in the church as gilded posts, painted sepulchres, whited walls, they seem beautiful; but when they go out, the gilt, and

\* Lor. in loc.

paint, and white, are, as it were, washed off, whereby their shameful rottenness appeareth, and according to St Paul's phrase, 2 Tim. iii. 9, 'their folly is made manifest to all men.' This is that which must fully be accomplished at the last day, when the separation between the sheep and the goats, the orthodox and the heretic, godly and wicked, shall be most perspicuous, and shame shall cover the faces of all apostates;\* but sometimes it is that which divine providence ordereth to fall out in this world, and that as for their greater ignominy, so,

(2.) For the safety of others, *ut à fidelibus vitari possint*, so Estius; *ne alios corrumpant*, so Danæus; † that, being discovered, they may be avoided, and their infection prevented. Whilst the wolf is covered with a sheep's skin, he is not so easily discerned, but when the skin is plucked over his ears, the true sheep can far better beware him.

To wind up this, learn we hence,

1. To adore, admire, and extol the wisdom, mercy, and justice of our God, in discovering hypocrites by their apostasy. It is that we have so much the more reason to take notice of, because we see it so much fulfilled in our days. The times we live in have been times of trial. God hath, as it were by a fan, winnowed us, whereby the chaff is discovered, as by a wind shaken us, so that the rotten boughs and fruit fall off. How many who, whilst the church had the reins of government in her hands, embraced her doctrine, revered her clergy, conformed to her discipline, have now made manifest, that though among, they were not of us! Their factious schismatical spirits, which fear then bridled, having now had an opportunity, shew themselves openly. Oh let us bless that divine providence which hath suffered it thus to be, as in justice to them for their detection, so in mercy to the church for her purgation.

2. To beware how we please ourselves with hypocritical shows. *Nemodiu ingenium abscondit*, we cannot long conceal our temper. Though the ape be dressed up in a man's habit, it will upon any opportunity discover its apish nature. *Citò ad naturam ficta redierunt*, what is feigned is forced, and cannot be lasting; besides, it is the just judgment of God on all hypocrites, sooner or later to discover them. They may for a time cozen men, but God cannot be deceived. Whilst yet they remain in the church, they are known to him, as Judas was to Christ; and though he wink at them for a time, yet in due time he will pluck off their mask, and so order it, that they shall be made manifest. For so it fell out here with these antichrists, who (saith the apostle) 'went away from us, that it might be manifest they were not of us.'

\* Separatio perspicuè in die judicii futura est.—Aug.

† Dan. in loc. Est. in loc.

## SERMON XLIX.

*But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*—1 JOHN II. 20, 21.

IT is not unfitly observed, that in those colder and frosty countries of the East, there are plenty of beasts which afford furs to keep men's bodies warm; that in the beginning of the spring, when serpents peep out of their holes, the ash puts forth, which is a present remedy against their sting and teeth. No less, yea, far more, considerable is the care of God in reference to his church, who, as he permits heresies and schisms to disturb her, so he hath provided helps to preserve her. For this end he hath appointed her his written word as a sure canon, a safe guide, and an unerring rule; for this cause he 'hath given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,' to build her up in the orthodox faith; finally, to this end, above all, he hath given her his Holy Spirit, whose illuminating and sanctifying grace is sufficient for her, of which it is our apostle here mindeth the Christians.

'But you have an unction from the Holy One,' &c.

In these two verses, we have two generals:

A remedy prescribed, or rather described, against the antichristian poison: 'But you have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.'

An apology annexed, whereby an objection is prevented which otherwise might have been made: 'I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.'

Begin we with the remedy, as it is set down in the twentieth verse, concerning which we may take notice of four particulars.

The quality, what it is: an *unction*.

The community, whose it is: *you* have an unction.

The originality, whence it is: *from the Holy One*.

The efficacy, what it doth: and *you know all things*.

If you please to reduce the four to three, take notice of,

The nature of the antidote, it is an *unction*.

The author of it, who is called the *Holy One*.

The worth of it, by it *we know all things*.

Once more, reduce the three to two, and then here is observable,

*Doni collatio*, a gift conferred, 'You have an unction from the Holy One.'

*Beneficii illatio*, a benefit inferred, and 'you know all things.'

In the handling of the former of these, we shall consider these three things:

The matter, or thing given, an *unction*.

The recipients, to whom it is given, *you have*.

The donor, by whom it is given, *the Holy One*.

1. The thing given as an antidote or remedy against

the poison of antichristian doctrine is an unction, a metaphorical and allusive expression. Anointing most properly is with oil, or else with ointments, in which usually oil is the chief ingredient; but, metaphorically, anointing is with the Spirit, which is as oil and ointment. Thus we find the prophet saying, concerning himself literally, and Christ mystically, Isa. lxi. 1, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me,' to wit, with his Spirit; more plainly the apostle Peter, Acts x. 48, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost;' and St Paul sufficiently intimateth it, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22, when he saith concerning Christians, 'God hath anointed, and sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts,' the Spirit being, as the earnest, so the seal and the ointment: and accordingly the generality of expositors do here interpret the Spirit of God, with his gifts and graces, to be this unction. St Austin, among many others, is express: \* *unctio spiritualis ipse Spiritus sanctus*, the Spirit of God is the spiritual unction. And accordingly this is one of the titles which are given to the Holy Ghost in that divine hymn,

'The fountain and the lively spring of joy celestial,  
The fire so bright, the love so clear, and unction spiritual.'

That the fragrancy of this metaphor may the better appear, give me leave to break the box, and let you see how fitly it is applicable to the blessed Spirit. To this end it will not be amiss to consider the properties and the uses of oil and ointment.

1. There are three eminent properties of oil, which fully agree to the Holy Ghost, purity, permanency, and excellency.

(1.) Oil is of such a nature as that it will hardly mingle with other liquors, and whatsoever liquor you mix it with, it still is uppermost. In this a fit emblem of the Spirit, especially in respect of its sanctifying grace, which will not mix itself with any sin, and, wherever it is, keepeth corruption under. Indeed, wine and water will easily incorporate, but oil will not. Natural and acquired habits may consist with the predomiancy of some lust, and therefore it is that acuteness of wit, strength of memory, depth of judgment, readiness of elocution, skill in arts and sciences, and such like excellencies, are to be found in wicked men, but those spiritual infused habits of grace will not admit the dominion of any sin, so that though sin still remain, yet it doth not, cannot rule in the regenerate.

(2.) Oil is of a lasting durance; it is not as the water, evaporated by the scorching heat, or congealed

\* Aug. in loc.



by the freezing cold, whereby is shadowed the perpetuity of the Spirit's renewing grace, notwithstanding the heat of persecution, and the cold of temptation. The hypocrite's fruit withereth when the sun scorseth; like the standing pool, he is dry in the heat of summer, his courage faileth, grace decayeth; whereas the true Christian retaineth his integrity in the worst adversity. When the northern wind of diabolical temptation bloweth upon an hypocrite, his zeal cooleth, his grace freezeth; whereas sanctifying grace in the heart of the regenerate keepeth its virtue.

(3.) Oil is of great worth; it is reckoned up as one of those choice blessings which God conferred upon Israel: Ezek. xvi. 19, 'I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' It was one of the precious things in Hezekiah's treasury which he shewed to the king of Babylon's messenger: Isa. xxxix. 2, 'The silver, the gold, the spices, and the precious ointment,' where it is observable that, besides it is numbered among the precious things, it hath also the epithet of *precious* in particular annexed to it, as also by Solomon, where he saith, 'A good name is better than precious ointment.' But surely, as there the wise man prefers a good name, so much more is the Spirit and his grace to be preferred before it; *τίμιον ἀληθῶς το πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*, saith the Greek father.\* In very deed, the Holy Spirit is a precious thing. This oil is invaluable, this jewel is incomparable, and if the soul which dwelleth in our bodies be more worth than the whole world, this Spirit which dwelleth in our souls must needs be of an infinite and transcendent value.

2. Besides these properties, there is a double use of oil, to wit, for eating and anointing; and the operation of oil in both these uses aptly sets forth the Spirit's efficacy.

1. Oil, being eaten, is sweet to the palate, and therefore manna, for its pleasant taste, is compared to it, Ezek. xvi. 13; wholesome and nourishing to the body, and therefore joined with fine flour and honey, Num. xi. 8. It was by meal and oil that the widow was preserved alive in famine, 1 Kings xvii. 12. Besides, it helpeth digestion of other meats, and therefore it is eaten with raw herbs and such like cool things; nay more than so, though a man have swallowed poison, being taken into the stomach, it will expel it, and preserve the body from death. All which are true of the Spirit's graces, by which we are enabled to digest the word of God, not only its promises, but threatenings; the poison of sin is expelled out of the heart, so far as it shall not hurt us; our spiritual taste delighted, yea, our soul is nourished to eternal life.

2. But I must remember the word in my text is *unction*, and therefore it is most suitable to consider oil as it is of use in anointing, and thus the parallel will hold in several respects, some whereof are more

general and others more special, both very significant to our present purpose.

1. The more general uses of anointing with oil are these six.

(1.) Anointing wounds with oil healeth them; upon which account the Samaritan poured in, as wine for cleansing, so oil for healing, the wounded man, Luke x. 25. Nothing more frequently used by apothecaries and chirurgeons than oils and ointments. This is the Spirit's efficacy, who is therefore called the Comforter, viz. against all those disquietments which unsettle the mind and wound the conscience. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the person of Christ, saith, Isa. lxi. 3, 'The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, to heal the broken-hearted;' indeed, in regard of the wicked he is a reprover, to wound; but in regard of the weak, he is a comforter, to heal.

(2.) Anointing tumours with oil softeneth them. To this the prophet alludeth, Isa. i. 6, where, speaking of the diseases of Israel's commonwealth, he saith, 'They have not been mollified with ointment.' This is the Spirit's operation, to soften the obdurate and proud sinner; and therefore when almighty God promiseth to 'take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh,' he presently addeth, 'I will put my Spirit within you, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

(3.) Anointing the joints with oil suppleth them, whereby they are nimble and active; for which cause it is that runners and wrestlers were used to anoint themselves beforehand. Thus doth the Spirit by his graces strengthen us with all might to run the way of God's commandments, and to wrestle with our corruptions. It is the prayer of David, Ps. li. 9, 'Establish me with thy free Spirit,' whom he calls by that epithet, no doubt for this reason, because it is the Spirit's work to set us free from the fetters of sin. Upon the same account he is called by the prophet, Isa. xi. 2, the Spirit of strength, and by the apostle, Rom. viii. 2, the Spirit of life, inasmuch as he strengthens us in our Christian race, and quickens us to spiritual performances. *Unctio spiritualis gratia adjuvat in firmitatem nostram*, saith the Latin father,\* the ointment of the Spirit's grace helpeth the weakness of our flesh; and the Greek father† aptly, we are enabled not only to do, but to suffer, *τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος ἁγίου*, by the efficacy of the Holy Ghost.

(4.) Anointing the face with oil puts as it were a gloss and beauty on it. Of this the psalmist taketh notice, Ps. civ. 15, where he saith, 'oil to cause the face to shine.' Naomi bids Ruth, before she went to Boaz, to anoint herself, Ruth iii. 3; and those virgins which were prepared for the Persian king, did use oil of myrrh, Esth. ii. 12, which hath an abstersive virtue, getting wrinkles out of the skin, and beautifying the face. So doth the Spirit by his graces put a beauty upon the soul, whereby it becometh amiable in God's eyes. 'Thou art fair' (saith Christ of his spouse, Cant. i. 15),

\* Cyr catech. xvi.

\* Bern.

† Cyr. cat. 16.

which, as it is true chiefly in regard of his imputed, so secondarily in regard of the Spirit's imparted, righteousness. All the wrinkles of sin, spots of the soul, are in part, and shall be fully done away by this ointment, which can turn Ethiopians into Nazarites.

(5.) Anointing the body, especially the head, with oil, is a great refreshment, inasmuch as it maketh way for the emission of noxious vapours, and the free passage of the spirits. There are three qualities of oil, *lavor, nitor, odor*, a smoothness to the touch, brightness to the sight, fragrancy to the smell; and so gratifying the senses, it must needs cause delight to those who are anointed with it. Upon this account, no doubt, it was used in feasts and banquets. So much David intimateth, Ps. xxiii. 5, when he joineth anointing his head with preparing his table; and our Saviour, Mat. vi. 17, when he joineth washing the face and anointing the head. To this Solomon alludeth when, persuading to a cheerful life, he saith, Eccles. ix. 8, 'Let thy head want no ointment;' and the prophet Amos, chap. vi. 6, when describing the jollity of those epicures, he saith, 'They anoint themselves with the chief ointments;' to which agreeth that of Wisdom,\* Come, let us fill ourselves with wine and ointment. How fitly doth this represent the Spirit's unction, which alone rejoice and exhilarate the soul! For this reason it is, that the Holy Ghost is called the 'oil of gladness,' Ps. xlv. 7, and joy is called the 'joy of the Holy Ghost,' Rom. xiv. 17, and is reckoned up as one of the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. That joy which doth not proceed from him is a worldly madness, not true joy; the heart cannot be really merry, till it is anointed with the grace and comfort of the Spirit.

(6.) Lastly, and most suitably to the text in hand, anointing the eyes cleareth them. So much is intimated in the counsel of Christ to the Laodicean church: Rev. iii. 17, 'Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.' So doth this spiritual unction enable the mind to discern spiritual objects; and whereas other ointments may help the dim sight, this opens the blind eyes. This is that which is illustrated by the penetrating virtue of oil when applied to any part of the body, which is by opening the pores. What other is the Spirit's illumination but a sacred penetration, by opening the understanding? To this purpose is that allusion concerning oil, that it feedeth the lamp, and so maintaineth the light, which otherwise would go out; for which reason oil was prepared for the light of the sanctuary, Exod. xxv. 6. Thus doth the blessed Spirit first cause (which oil cannot do), and then preserve a divine light in the soul, to guide its feet into the way of peace. We find in the ancient hieroglyphics the olive to have been an emblem of wisdom: true wisdom is from above, and drops down from that olive tree, the sacred Spirit. In one word, as the dove bringing an olive branch to Noah assured him that the waters were abated, so the Spirit, bringing an

\* Wisd. ii. 7.

olive branch of peace to the soul, enableth it to know that the waters of God's wrath are abated, than which no knowledge more desirable.

2. The more special use of anointing with oil is for the consecration or setting persons apart for some eminent office; more particularly, there were three offices to which men were with oil anointed, to wit, that of a king, a priest, and a prophet. We read in the ceremonial law, Exod. xxix. 7, of an oil which, by God's direction, was first to be made, and then poured on Aaron and his sons the priests; it was the command of God to Samuel that he should take an horn of oil, and anoint David king, 1 Sam. xv. 1. The like ceremony we find used in Solomon's inauguration. God bid Elijah to anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat to be prophet in his room, 1 Kings xix. 16. To this practice Calvin conceiveth\* that the apostle alludeth in this place. Indeed, by this unction it is that we are consecrated kings to captivate our lusts, moderate our passions, and order our conversations; priests, to keep ourselves unspotted of the world, to sacrifice our bestial lusts, and to offer up prayers and praises to God; finally, (and most congruously to our apostle's scope) prophets, to understand in some measure the spiritual mysteries of salvation.

What now remaineth for the closing of this particular, but that we look upon this word *unction* as a word of security, of humility, of dignity, of hilarity, of felicity, and of duty.

It is a word,

1. Of *security*. Indeed, that is the design of our apostle, to point out to us what is our best safeguard against the blows, refuge from the storm, and antidote against the poison, especially of heretics and heresies. So much the adversative particle *but* intimateth, that this unction is opposed as a preservative against heresy. That promise of God to his people, concerning the Assyrian, Isa. x. 17, 'His burden shall be taken from thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, because of the anointing,' is no less true of this unction, by which our necks are freed from the yoke of destroying errors. Warriors of old, that they might make their armour glisten, and render themselves formidable to their enemies, used to anoint it with oil. To this the prophet alludeth where he saith, Isa. xxi. 5, 'Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.' Lo, here an anointing, which is our shield, whereby we become terrible to Satan and his instruments, so that in vain do antichrists set themselves against those who are guarded with this unction.

2. Of *humility*. Letting us see what we are in and of ourselves, how hard our hearts, dead our affections, blind our understandings; how destitute of grace and peace, and joy, yea, all heavenly good; else what need were there of this unction to soften, enlighten, and enliven us? The truth is, as the box hath no fragrancy in itself but what it receiveth from the oint-

\* Calvin in loc.



ment that is in it, no more have we any excellency but what we receive from the Spirit. Abraham's faith, Solomon's wisdom, Job's patience, David's zeal, Noah's obedience, were all but as so many drops of this oil; and therefore let us learn to be vile in our own eyes, taking nothing to ourselves but ignorance, and folly, and wickedness.

3. Of *dignity*. Glorious things are spoken of believers by the apostle Peter: 1 Peter ii. 9, where he saith, they are 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;' and these privileges they partake of by virtue of this unction. Greater honour there cannot be than those of royalty and priesthood. Kings are honourable, and priests are venerable; kings are the greatest of men, priests are men of God. Such honour have all they to whom this sacred unction is given. Wicked men have low thoughts of believers; it is because they perceive not this unction: but it matters not to be despicable in the world's, whilst we are honourable in God's, eyes.

4. Of *hilarity*. Indeed, this oil is called by the psalmist, 'the oil of gladness,' inasmuch as it fills the heart with spiritual joy. There is, as Bellarmine well observeth,\* an oil of sadness, which is used at funerals, and there is an oil of gladness, which is used at festivals, and to this is the Spirit compared. None are more cheerful in all conditions than the anointed ones; this oil so mitigateth the asperity of affliction that those who have it are 'exceeding joyful in all their tribulations.' In which respect St Jerome saith excellently, *Multi vident crucem nostram, sed non vident unctionem nostram*, many see our affliction, but not our unction; our troubles, but not our comforts; our tribulation, but not our consolation, which far exceeds them.

5. Of *felicity*. Indeed, as the anointing of David by Samuel assured him of the possession of the crown and kingdom in due time, so doth this unction ascertain all believers of the kingdom which was prepared for them from the beginning of the world. To this purpose it is that the Spirit, which here is called the unction, is elsewhere by St Paul styled 'the earnest of our inheritance, Eph. i. 13;' and as receiving the earnest entitleth to the inheritance, so doth the receiving of the Spirit. Thus, by what we have, we conclude what we shall have, and the participation of the unction giveth a firm expectance of the coronation.

6. Of *duty*, which lieth in two things:

(1.) Making use of this unction for those choice and excellent ends to which it is designed. It is not the ointment in the box, but applied to the part, which becometh effectual. What will the most precious unguent avail him that hath it, but doth not use it? Oh, therefore, Christians, be wise to improve this unction to the best advantage. When, then, at any time, we feel our consciences wounded, our spirits dejected, have recourse to this unction for benefit and comfort; if (as oh, how oft!) thou perceivest in thyself an

\* Bel. conc. xxxi.

hardness and darkness, rendering thee unprofitable under the means of grace, and unfit for holy services, make use of this unction to soften and quicken thee.

(2.) Walking worthy of, and answerably to, this unction. It is an undoubted truth, where much is received, much is expected; the greater helps are afforded, the greater performances are required. God looketh for more from them to whom he hath given his written word, than from those who have only the light of nature; and he looketh for yet far more from them to whom he giveth an internal revelation, than those who have only an external revelation; and therefore, as St Paul exhorts the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. iv. 1, to 'walk worthy of their high and heavenly calling,' so let me exhort Christians to walk worthy of this high and heavenly unction. And so much for the matter of the gift; pass we on to

2. The recipients of this gift, in the pronoun *you*; not only *we* apostles, but *you* Christians; and so this appeareth to be a privilege belonging to all that are effectually called to Christianity. It is St Paul's universal negative, Rom. viii. 9, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,' in which is included that universal affirmative, all that are Christ's have his Spirit.

To open this briefly, you must distinguish,

1. Between the miraculous and the gracious unction. Some expositors conceive our apostle here refers to that unction of the apostles in the day of Pentecost, with extraordinary gifts, whereby the truth of evangelical doctrine was confirmed. But had this been his meaning, he should rather have said *we* have an unction; for though the scent and perfume of that unction filled the whole church, and so it was for the benefit of all Christians, establishing them in the faith, yet the oil itself was poured upon the apostles; and therefore that sense of that phrase seemeth much strained, '*you* have an unction,' that is, '*we* have an unction for your good.' It is true that in the primitive times the miraculous unction was not only conferred upon the apostles, but upon many Christians; but yet, since our apostle affirmeth it indefinitely of those to whom he wrote, I rather conceive that here he intends that unction of illuminating and sanctifying grace which every Christian is partaker of, and by which he is enabled to know and believe to salvation; for though every believer is not anointed with the Holy Ghost and power, yet he is anointed with the Holy Ghost and grace.

2. Between the possession and the manifestation of this unction. It is one thing to have it, and another to know we have it; there may be a presence of the Spirit, and yet not a sense of that presence; a man may have a treasure in his field, and not know it; all Christians have this unction from their first conversion, though perhaps they are not presently apprehensive of its virtue and operation.

3. Between the droppings and the pourings out of

this unction. It is one thing to *have* the Spirit, and another to be *filled with* the Spirit. This unction is variously distributed; to some in a greater, to others in a lesser, but to all Christians in some measure. It is not for every Christian, like St Stephen, to be 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' Acts vi. 8; and yet there is no Christian of whom it can be said, as St Jude of those false teachers, 'not having the Spirit,' Jude 19.

To wind it up; if we pretend to Christianity, where is our unction? Where are the virtues and efficacies of our unction? The Holy Ghost, who is here called an unction, is elsewhere compared to a seal; and as men use to set their seals on their own wares, so doth God his Spirit upon them that are his. Oh let this be the chief of our desires and endeavours, that God would make us his sealed, his anointed ones: and whilst others count it their happiness when they can say, We have lands, and houses, and riches, we have swords, and sceptres, and robes; we have dainties and music, and all sort of delights; let us esteem it our bliss, and make it the height of our ambition to say, we have an unction. And so much for that.

3. The last particular remaining to be discussed in this general, is the donor of this gift, namely, 'the Holy One;' by which some understand the third person in the sacred Trinity, to whom this character so fitly agreeth, that he is usually set forth by this title, the Holy Ghost. But the Scripture phrase is not anointing *from*, but *with* the Holy Ghost, by which is intimated that the Holy Ghost is the unguent itself; and therefore it is more rational to understand by the *Holy One*, Christ,\* from whom it is we have the unction of his Spirit. So that in the handling of this part, I shall first give you an account how fitly and fully it agreeth to Christ; and then reflect upon the unction, how justly it is affirmed to be from Christ.

1. It would not be passed by that the apostle, mentioning Christ, describeth him by holiness. It is the title by which he characteriseth himself in the beginning of his epistle to the church of Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 7, 'These things saith he that is holy.' And that he spake no more than truth of himself, you may hear the same from the mouth of his and our grand adversary the devil, 'I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God,' Mark i. 24. Our apostle here sets it down very emphatically, the Holy One, that is, singularly, eminently, perfectly holy; or in Daniel's phrase, chap. ix. 24, the holy of holies, which our translators fitly render by the superlative degree, 'the most holy' one. Look as a little before the devil is called 'the wicked one,' because he is extremely wicked, so Christ is called 'the holy one,' as being transcendently holy.

It is that which is true of Christ in reference to both his natures, as God and as man.

1. Holiness is the inseparable property of a deity;

\* *ἀγιος* interpretor de Christo.—*Dan. Grot.*

it is, as it were, the excellency and perfection of the Godhead, and crown of all the attributes. Now Christ is God's own Son, to whom he communicateth himself, and so this holiness. The angels in Isaiah, chap. vi. 3, and the beasts in the Revelations, chap. iv. 5, giving glory to God, three times iterate, 'Holy, holy, holy,' with reference, as some\* conceive, to all the three persons, Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Spirit. And thus Christ, as God, is holy in his nature, in his decrees, in his word and works; and eternally holy in all he is and willet, he saith and doth; according to that of the psalmist. Ps. cxli. 17, 'He is holy in all his works.'

2. As man, he is the holy one; and that both in respect of his conception and conversation.

(1.) His conception was holy, because of the Holy Ghost, who overshadowed the virgin, purifying that part of her substance of which Christ was born, whereby he was free from all that corruption which is by Adam propagated to his posterity. To this probably refers that phrase, Acts iv. 23, 'the holy child Jesus;' and certainly that of the angel to the virgin, Luke i. 35, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore the holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' True it is, Christ took upon him the reality of frail flesh, but only the likeness of sinful flesh; and though he assumed our natural, yet not our vicious defects.

(2.) His conversation was holy. Indeed, how could any impure stream flow from so pure a spring? His nature being holy, his life could not be unholy; and there being an exact integrity in the one, there must needs be a spotless innocency in the other. On the one hand, he was to be a pattern of holiness, after whose copy all Christians are to write; good reason it should be exact, without the least blot; on the other hand, he was to be a sacrifice for sin, which he could not have been if he had not been without sin, and therefore it behoved him to 'fulfil all righteousness' by a full conformity to that exact rule of God's law.

Nor is he only holy, but the Holy One, in respect of both his natures.

1. In regard of his divine nature, inasmuch as he is essentially, infinitely, originally, and immutably holy. *Essentially*, because his holiness is not an accident to him, but his very essence; *infinitely*, because his holiness is not only without imperfection but limitation; *originally*, because his holiness is from himself, and he is the cause of all holiness in the creature; *immutably*, because it is altogether impossible he should cease to be holy, for then he must cease to be God. Well might Hannah say, 1 Sam. ii. 6, 'None holy as the Lord.' And indeed this phrase is most properly verified of him in this regard; for as Aristotle, though he call other things good, yet when he speaketh of the chief good, he calleth it by

\* Vide Damasc. de *Orthod. fide*. lib. iii. cap. x.



way of eminency τὸ ἀγαθὸν, *the good*; so though the creature may be said to be holy, yet ὁ ἅγιος, *the holy one*, most properly belongs to God; though yet,

Secondarily, and in a comparative sense, not only with all other men but angels, Christ, in respect of his human nature, is the holy one, and that upon a a double account. †

The one, because the holiness of his human nature far surpasseth that which is in any other creature, and that inasmuch as it was presently to be united with the Godhead. And if some measure of holiness be required in all that approach God, how unmeasurable and perfect must be that holiness of Christ's human nature, which is united with God, and in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily?

The other, because whereas all other creatures have holiness only for themselves, and cannot convey it to others; in which respect St Austin saith\* of holy parents, they beget their children, *Non ē principis novitatis, sed ē reliquiis vetustatis*, not from the principles of the new man, but the remainders of the old man, and so cannot communicate their holiness to their children. Christ is a Sun of righteousness, imparting holiness to his church; a root of holiness (as the first Adam was of wickedness), giving the sap of grace to all his branches; in which regard St Paul saith expressly, he is 'made to us of God sanctification.'

Oh then let us learn to magnify Christ in and for his holiness. That phrase in Moses his hymn, 'Who is like to thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness?' what doth it intimate but that holiness calls for glory and praise? Worthy, then, is he who is the holy one to be honoured and adored by us. That expression of the psalmist, 'holy and reverend is his name,' plainly teacheth us that sanctity calls for reverence. Oh let us reverence the person and hallow the name of Christ, because he is the holy one. What the Romanists do parasitically to the pope, Christ's pretended vicar, calling him superlatively, *Most Holy Father*, and abstractively, *His Holiness*, that we need not fear to do religiously to Christ himself.

And since we call ourselves Christians, oh let us account ourselves engaged to the study and exercise of holiness. It is St Peter's reasoning, 1 Pet. i. 15, 'Since he which hath called you is holy.' Nor is the argument less valid, he by whose name you are called is holy, 'Be you holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be you holy, for I am holy.' How unsuitable are unholy members to an unholy head! and therefore how abominable must profane Christians be to this holy Jesus! Certainly the Holy One is 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity' (to wit, without fury) in any, and much less in his own followers; and as Moses saith, Lev. x. 3, 'God will be sanctified in those who draw nigh to him,' so let me tell you, Christ will be sanctified by those who

\* Aug. adv. Pelag.

profess his name; and therefore either disclaim Christianity or embrace sanctity, that you may be in some measure like him who is here styled the Holy One.

2. Having given you this view of the title by which Christ is called, be pleased now to look upon this person so called, as he is affirmed to be the donor of the unction; for so the text runs, 'You have an unction from the Holy One,' that is, from Christ.

It is that which is true of Christ in a double causality.

1. Meritorious, inasmuch as he was at the cost to purchase this unction, and that at no less a rate than his own blood. The apostle Paul, speaking of Christ, saith not only that 'in him we have redemption through his blood,' Eph. i. 9, 10, but a little after, 'in whom you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,' the donation of the Spirit being one of those precious benefits which Christ's death hath procured for us.

2. Efficient, inasmuch as having on the cross purchased this unction for us, he rose from the grave, and went up into heaven, for this cause among others, that he might actually confer it on us. It is said there was in Rome at the day of Christ's birth a fountain of oil which sprang forth. Sure I am this unction of the Spirit is given to Christ, not only for himself but his church; and as the ointment trickled down from Aaron's head to the very skirts of his garment, Ps. cxxxiii. 3, so the oil of the Spirit is diffused from Christ to all his members. Those two olive branches mentioned by the prophet Zechariah, chap. iv. 12, are by some expounded of Christ his two natures; and of them it is said, they empty the golden oil out of themselves, to note that communicative influence from Christ to the Christian, whereby he partaketh of this unction. 'It pleased the Father' (saith the apostle, Col. i. 17) 'that in him should all fulness dwell;' not only *plenitudo abundantia*, but *redundantia*; *vasis*, but *fontis*; an abundant fulness, as in a vessel filled up to the brim; but a redundant fulness, as in a fountain, 'whose streams make glad the city of God.' Thus, as it is said in the Psalms, lxxviii. 20, 'he received gifts,' so in the epistle, Eph. iv. 10, 'he gave gifts;' intimating that he received gifts not only for himself but his church; that as he received from his Father the Spirit without measure, so we might receive from him the Spirit by measure. No wonder if the Spirit be called in Scripture, 'the Spirit of Christ,' 2 Cor. iii. 17, and 'the Spirit of Christ Jesus,' Philip. i. 19, and 'the Spirit of the Lord,' Rom. viii. 9.

If any shall ask why the apostle did not say, you have an unction from him, or from Christ, but from the Holy One; the answer may probably be returned, that it is to intimate the nature of this unction, which is an holy ointment, and for that end it is chiefly given by Christ, namely, for the renewing and sanc-

tifying of our natures; that as the ointment which God appointed to be made by Moses did sanctify the things and persons which were anointed with it, Exod. xxx. 26, 29, so doth this unction confer holiness on those to whom it is given; upon which account it is called 'the Spirit of holiness;' and thus it is universally given to all believers, for the preserving them both from sin and error.

To end this point, and so this discourse. You who are Christians only in name, and want this unction; you who are Christians indeed, and would have this

unction more abundantly; learn whither to repair for it. It is our Saviour's advice to the Laodicean church, and in her to all Christians, 'I counsel thee to buy of me.' This choice commodity is nowhere else to be had; and though it cost him dear, yet he sells it us cheap; our buying is only begging, our paying praying. And therefore acknowledging, as all our comfort to be in him, so grace to be from him, let us continually depend on him, earnestly seek to him, that as he hath shed his blood for us, so he would shed his Spirit on us. Amen.

## SERMON L.

*But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*—1 JOHN II. 20.

THE Christian religion, as it imposeth difficult precepts, so it proposeth precious promises; and though it put the professors of it upon frequent dangers, yet it withal assureth them of glorious privileges. Among those many promises and privileges, none of more special concernment than this of the holy unction, the Spirit's donation, by which we are enabled to all duty, and confirmed against all perils. There are two things especially by which the Christian church and her members are endangered, namely, violent persecutions and virulent heresies; these corrupt our minds, those perplex our hearts; these cheat us of, those affright us out of, truth; but this spiritual unction is both our consolation and illumination, the latter of which it is that our apostle acquaints us with in the text, 'But you have, &c.

The second part of this verse is that which I am now to handle, namely, *beneficii illatio*, the benefit conferred on all true Christians, by virtue of this unction, as it is set down in those words, 'And you know all things.' For the fuller discussion whereof be pleased to consider it both absolutely and relatively, inclusively and exclusively. By the one we shall see the nature of the benefit, wherein it consists, how far it reacheth; and by the other, its original, whence it floweth, and on what it dependeth, namely, the holy unction.

1. Begin we with the absolute consideration of the benefit, and inquire what is involved in this, 'You know all things.' There is some little difference in the reading of one word in this clause, which would not be omitted. The Syriac reads it as if it were *παντός*, you know all men, and so the benefit here intended is that which is called by St Paul, 1 Cor. xii. 10, 'discerning of spirits;' *τουτέστι* saith Theophilact,\* *τὸ εἰδέναι τὴν ὁ πνευματικὸς καὶ τὴν ὁ μὴ, τὴν ὁ προφήτης καὶ τὴν ὁ ἀπατεῶν*, that is, to know who is spiritual and who is not, who is a prophet and who is a deceiver. Nor is this reading here unsuitable, because the apostle just before speaketh of antichrists,

\* Vide Theoph. *ibid*.

between whom and the orthodox St John might look upon the Christians to whom he wrote as able to judge. Now, this gift in the primitive times was double; the one more special, only conferred by the Spirit's extraordinary unction upon some eminent persons, whereby they were able to dive into the very hearts of men, and could positively conclude them (as the apostle Peter did Simon Magus, Acts. viii. 23), to be 'in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,' notwithstanding their fair professions and specious pretences; the other more general, and to which all Christians, by virtue of this unction, were enabled, namely, to know all men by their fruits, according to that rule our Saviour giveth concerning false teachers, Mat. vii. 16, who, being ravenous wolves, came in sheep's clothing, 'by their fruits (that is, by their works and conversation), or rather by their fruits (that is, by their doctrines and positions) 'you shall know them;' a gift which, if every Christian might not in some measure attain to, that counsel of trying the spirits, which our apostle giveth in this very epistle, would be in vain.

But the Greek lection is our best rule, which is *παντά*, and accordingly our English version is most genuine, 'you know all things;' for the fuller opening of which, take notice of the extent of the object, *all things*, and the intent of the act, *you know*.

1. Begin we with the extent of the object; and this is set down in a word of the utmost latitude, 'all things;' but yet a limitation must be annexed to this latitude, and this universal particle restrained. It is the observation of a learned divine,\* that God admits into his own names and attributes that addition of universality, *omne*, as though he would especially be known by that. Thus he is said to be omnipresent, omnissufficient, omnipotent, and omniscient; and indeed as an ubiquitary existence, illimited fulness, infinite power, so an universal knowledge is reciprocal with the Deity, and therefore incommunicable to any creature, so that though there be not expressed,

\* Dr Donne.



yet it must be supplied, a qualifying word. They are *quædam omnia*, some certain all things, which Christians do know by virtue of this unction.

More particularly, there is a threefold limitation of this all things.

1. All divine things. We are not to imagine that this unction maketh all Christians acquainted with the secrets of nature, mysteries of trades, axioms of arts, idioms of languages; for then every Christian should be an orator, philosopher, artificer, expert in all manner of knowledge. Indeed, if the Spirit pleased, he could inspire such a knowledge into the minds of believers; and we find particular instances of those to whom he hath extraordinarily given knowledge in human things, when it hath been in subserviency to some divine ends. So Bezaleel is said to be 'filled with the Spirit,' and skilled to do the work of the sanctuary, Exod. xxxi. 3. Thus the illiterate fishermen were furnished with the gift of tongues, to speak to the people in their several languages the mysteries of the gospel; but yet this is not the Spirit's ordinary way, who leaveth human knowledge to the acquisition of human industry, and consequently it is only the knowledge of divine things which is here meant.

2. All divine things revealed. That speech of Moses, Deut. xxix. 29, 'Secret things belong to God, revealed things to us and to our children,' plainly intimateth that there are some things which God in wisdom keepeth hid from the sons of men; and as he in Plutarch answered the man which asked him why his basket was covered, because he should not look into it, so hath God therefore concealed those things that we should not pry into them. It was the fault of our first parents, that they desired to know more than God would have them; as we do not, so we must not desire, to know hidden mysteries. Indeed, the psalmist's expression is, Ps. xxv. 13, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him;' but what that secret is appeareth in the very next verse, 'he will shew him his covenant,' which is revealed in his word, and is only secret because hid from them that perish. True it is, where this unction is extraordinarily conferred upon prophets and apostles, they have been so inspired as to discern, and accordingly to utter strange things, such as were to come to pass many ages after; but still the ordinary influence of this unction enableth only to know those things which God hath revealed in his word.

3. All divine things revealed that are necessary to be known; *omnia necessaria cognoscendis antichristis, et cavendis illorum insidiis*, so Beza and Grotius,\* all things necessary for discovering these antichrists and avoiding their snares; *omnia quæ ad salutem pertinent*, so Bernard and Ferns,† all things which are necessary to salvation. We are not to imagine that this unction enlighteneth every Christian to understand

\* Beza in loc.; Grot. in loc.

† Fer. in loc.; Bern. ser. ii. de Pentecost.

the whole Scripture so far as to interpret its dark sentences, enigmatical phrases, abstruse prophecies; but so far as is needful in order to preserve us from damnable heresies and the attaining of eternal salvation, this unction enableth to apprehend the will of God revealed in his word.

With these limitations we may very well enlarge *all things* to God, Christ, ourselves, sin, Satan, the law, the gospel, grace, and glory. Christians know *God*, his unity and trinity, his mercy and faithfulness, power and wisdom, justice and goodness; they know *Christ*, his person, his nature, his offices, his benefits, and that love of his which passeth knowledge; they know *themselves*, how wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked; they know the sinfulness of *sin*, the devices of *Satan*, the deceitfulness of their own hearts; they know what it is God *requireth* of them, and what he hath *promised* to them; they know the things that are freely *given* them of God, and the things that are mercifully *prepared* for them; in a word, whatever things pertain to life and godliness, to glory and happiness, are in some measure made known to them. And thus you have a short account of the large extent of this object. Pass we on to the,

2. Intent of the act, *you know*. Now, that knowledge which this unction effects in the minds of believers hath these three properties: it is,

(1.) Certain and establishing. It is not a conjectural opinion, but a confident persuasion, which Christians have of divine truths. *Non levi quâdam et perfuntoriâ, sed solidâ cognitione rerum inibuti estis*, so Grotius glosseth.\* It is not a slight and perfunctory, but a solid and evident knowledge, so that neither the subtleties of antichristian teachers, nor the violences of antichristian persecutors, can withdraw such an one from the truth he hath embraced. 'We believe and are sure' (saith St Peter, in the name of himself and the rest of the disciples, John vi. 69), 'that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.' Indeed, there are different degrees of this certainty, according to the different dispensation of this unction; but every one who is taught of God and anointed with the Holy Ghost hath some measure of certainty as to fundamental verities. When perhaps his head is too weak to grapple with some kind of heretical arguments, yet his heart is strongly resolved to hold fast the evangelical doctrines; and though he cannot dispute, yet he will believe; and though they be things not seen by sense or reason, yet his faith, being built on a divine testimony, maketh them clear and evident, Heb. xi. 1, so as he dares venture his soul on them.

(2.) Savoury and relishing. He that hath this unction, so knoweth, as to taste a sweetness and excellency in divine things, insomuch that, with St Paul, he accounts all other things as dung and loss in comparison of the excellency of this knowledge. There is a great deal of difference between that knowledge a

\* Grot in loc.

man hath of countries by a map, and that which he attaineth to by travels. It is one thing for a man to hear a discourse of the beauty of colours, or the sweetness of honey, and another for a man to see the one and taste the other. 'Oh taste and see' (saith the psalmist, Ps. xxxiv. 6) 'that the Lord is good;' so doth every Christian. His knowledge in divine things is like the eye to colours, and the taste to meats: he so seeth, as to be enamoured with the beauty; he so tasteth, as to be well pleased with the sweetness of them. The needle which is touched with the loadstone, doth not more naturally move towards the pole, than a soul touched with the blessed Spirit moveth towards heavenly objects. In one word, this knowledge, like the light, not of the moon, but sun, is ever attended with heat, and so doth not only enlighten the mind, but enliven and inflame the affections.

(3.) Operative and transforming. 'We all' (saith the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18), 'with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.' In other sciences, a man may be exact at the theory, and unskilful in the practice; but in divinity, that only is the right knowledge which mouldeth a man into the frame of what he knoweth. We read of Jacob, Gen. xxx. 37-39, that upon the agreement between him and Laban, 'he took rods of green poplar, and the hazel, and chesnut-tree, and peeled white strakes in them, and made the white appear that was in the rods, and set them before the flocks, in the gutter, in the watering-troughs, when the flocks came to drink, and conceiving before the rods, they brought forth ring-straked, speckled, and spotted.' The like efficacy hath a true sight and apprehension of evangelical truths upon every Christian, enabling him to turn words into works, and shew forth a conformity to them in his life. He knoweth God and Christ, so as to trust in, and become like to, them; the precepts, so as to observe and obey them; sin and heresies, so as to abandon and abhor them; for which cause, perhaps, it is that the gospel is called a doctrine according to godliness, not only because it teacheth godliness, but being rightly known, it enableth men to live godly. Eunapius, in the Life of Porphyry, speaking of his master Longinus, saith that he was *βιβλιοθήκη τις ἑμψυχος καὶ περιπατῶν μουσεῖον*, a living library, a walking study; so is the anointed Christian, having digested the sense of Scripture into vital blood, and commenting upon scriptural doctrine by a practical conversation.

To shut up this first consideration in a double meditation.

1. How glorious a privilege is it to be a Christian, and partake of the unction. What is more valued by a rational creature than knowledge? And by virtue of this unction we attain the knowledge of all things,—I mean those all things which are the only things,—and without which he that hath the tongue of men and angels, and hath the exactest insight into arts

and sciences, may yet be said to know nothing, nothing of that which he ought chiefly to know, and which every true Christian in some measure attaineth to. How clear and quick-sighted is a spiritual enlightened eye! It seeth not only things that are near, but afar off; present, but future; things below, but above; looking even within the veil, into the holy of holies. The Christian knoweth those things which others are mere strangers to; he knoweth those things he did before, after another and a better manner. That blasphemous expression of the familists, that a Christian is deified, may in some sense receive a fair construction, whilst every Christian hath a kind of omnipotency and omniscieny. The former is by St Paul asserted of himself, Philip. iv. 13, 'I can do all things,' to wit, 'through Christ that strengtheneth me;' and the other is here affirmed by St John of the Christians, 'You know all things,' to wit, having received the unction.

2. How great will the capacity of our knowledge be when we come to heaven! What a surpassing brightness shall then encompass our souls, when we shall see all truth in him who is truth itself! That phrase of St Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 'we know in part,' seemeth directly opposite to this of St John, 'you know all things;' but yet they are easily reconciled, by observing St Paul's scope in that place, which is to compare our knowledge for the present with that which we shall have hereafter. In reference to which the largest measure of knowledge we attain here is but a narrow scantling; the knowledge we have here is an integral knowledge, extending itself to all things necessary, as a child is an integral man, having all the faculties and members of a man; and, therefore, truly saith our apostle, 'you know all things.' But yet withal it is a gradual knowledge, rising by degrees, as a child groweth stronger and taller, and is so imperfect, that, in comparison of that knowledge we hope for, justly said St Paul, 'we know in part.' Indeed, our present knowledge is but *scintilla futurae lucis*, a spark to that flame, a drop to that flood, a beam to that splendour we shall then enjoy; so that, though in itself it be an extensive, yet in this respect it is a defective, knowledge which we now attain. Then, and not till then, it is that we shall know all things which a rational creature is capable of; we shall swim in a vast ocean of divine knowledge; we shall be surrounded with such a glorious light, whereby we shall exactly, perfectly know whatever may conduce to make us happy. Oh, how few are the *all things* we see now, in respect of the *all things* we shall behold then! How many things are now hid from us, which shall then be discovered to us! And surely that little taste we have now of divine knowledge, cannot but make us long for that state wherein we shall have our full draught.

Having despatched the absolute, pass we on to the relative consideration of this benefit, as it is an



effect of that unction mentioned in the former clause ; and that such an effect, as can flow from no other cause, so that the affirmation intendeth a negation ; and when it is said, ' you have an unction, and know all things,' it implieth, that without this unction you cannot know any thing, to wit, of those things, and with that knowledge which is here intended, and hath already been unfolded.

Indeed, as to corporeal sight, there are among others two things especially required, to wit, an eye within, and a light without ; and, therefore, if either *adest lumen, et desunt oculi*, light be present, but the visive faculty absent, or *adsunt oculi, et deest lumen*, the visive faculty be present, but the light absent, there can be no sight ; so is there required to spiritual knowledge an external revelation, and an internal illumination, the one whereof sets the object before us, and the other elevateth the understanding within us, and both of those are from this unction.

1. By the extraordinary unction of the Holy Ghost, the apostles were inspired to reveal, both by their tongues and pens, evangelical doctrine ; and had there not been this revelation of it, we could never have known it. It is not once, but often, that the gospel is called a mystery ; yea, saith St Paul, without controversy it is a great mystery. Now, a mystery, as St Chrysostom well observeth,\* is *ἀπόρρητον και θάυμαστον και ἀγνωστόμενον*, something unutterable, admirable, and inconceivable, so that it could never have been found out by us, had it not been made known to us from above. As for human and natural things, reason is conversant about them ; and yet, even in these, it is many times nonplussed, as being not able to fathom the depth of them ; but as to divine things, reason is not only dim, but blind. Indeed, there are *κόιναι ἐνώσεις*, some common principles of divinity and morality, religion and honesty, still remaining in our nature ; but evangelical verities are such as reason could never have prompted to us ; so that what our Saviour said to Peter, concerning the particular article of his being the Son of the living God, Mat. xvi. 17, ' flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee,' may be asserted of all the doctrines of the gospel, they are such as natural reason could never have revealed to us. True it is, reason, that ' candle of the Lord,' as Solomon calls it, Prov. xx. 17, affords so much light even to pagans, as will render them inexcusable, since their not walking according to reason's dictates shall be their condemnation ; but it is Christ, ' the Sun of righteousness,' as Malachi calls him, Mal. iv. 2, who giveth us that light, by following of which we may attain salvation ; for ' no man knoweth the Father' (whom to know is eternal life) ' but the Son, and him to whom the Son revealeth him,' Mat. xi. 27. But this is that truth which is agreed to on all hands, even Pelagians and Socinians acknowledging the necessity

of divine revelation, in order to the acquisition of happiness.

2. Be pleased, therefore, to know further, that by the ordinary unction of the Spirit, which is conferred on every Christian in some degree or other, there is a spiritual illumination of the mind, whereby natural reason is elevated to a right apprehension of evangelical doctrines ; and this is no less needful than the former ; to which purpose is that gloss of Calvin upon the text, *Non acumine proprii sensus rectè sapienti homines, sed illuminatione Spiritus*, it is not by the sharpness of our own understanding, but by the enlightening of the Spirit, that we savour divine things.

To this truth St Paul giveth a most clear and full evidence, where he saith in express words, 1 Cor. ii. 14, ' But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ;' where the chief question to be resolved in order to the genuine interpretation of the words is, *who is the ψυχικός άνθρωπος*, natural man, concerning whom this is said, that he receiveth not, and cannot know, the things of the Spirit of God ?

Some affirm the natural man to be the weak believer ; but how weakly, will appear, if we observe the opposition of *ψυχικός*, which is not to *τέλειος*, one who is perfect, but *πνευματικός*, every one who is spiritual, which, though it be more eminently true of the strong, yet it is verified of every true Christian, he is one who hath not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, and so is among the number of the *we* mentioned in the twelfth verse of that chapter. And which fully cleareth it, that the *ψυχικός* here cannot be the weak Christian, is, that the things of the Spirit are said to be foolishness to him, which cannot be affirmed of any true Christian, though never so weak, who hath learned to adore and admire these divine mysteries which he cannot apprehend. Suitable hereunto it is, that the apostle, in the eighteenth verse of the former chapter, 1 Cor. i. 18, saith, ' The preaching of the cross is foolishness,' *ταῖς ἀπολλυμένοις*, ' to them that perish ;' whereas the weakest Christian is among the number of the *σωζομένοις* in the latter clause of that verse, ' them who are saved,' to whom, therefore, it is impossible that the things of the Spirit should be foolishness.

Others there are who by *ψυχικός* understand the man who is altogether destitute of the helps of ingenuous education and divine revelation, whereas our apostle plainly tells us in the former chapter that they were the ' wise disputers of the world,' to whom evangelical doctrine (when revealed) did seem no other than folly ; and therefore when Paul preached at Athens, a place of literature and knowledge, arts and sciences, the cry of those sophies is, ' What will this babblers say ?' Acts xvii. 18.

Once again, some there are who interpret this *ψυχικός* to be one who is given to sensual lusts, and so

\* Chrysost. in 15 Cor. Hom. vii.

hath his reason clouded by carnal affections; but it should then have been *σαρκικός*, not *ψυχικός*, between which Suidas and Isidore Peleusiota\* (from whom probably the other borrowed it) make this distinction, that the carnal man is one who serveth the flesh, and suffereth himself to be guided by his corrupt affections; and the natural or animal man, one who builds upon human reason, thinking by his ratiocinations, disputations, and syllogisms to find out what is just and profitable, not craving or admitting the influence of the Spirit.

The *ψυχικός* then here mentioned is every man who (though otherwise well furnished with intellectuals and morals, having all those improvements of reason which all kind of philosophy can afford him) is yet altogether destitute of the enlightening and renewing grace of the Holy Spirit. Nor is this my distinction, but St Jude's, who, in the characters he giveth of those false teachers, puts these two together, *ψυχικοί, πνεύμα μὴ ἔχοντες*, explaining the former by the latter, and letting us see that all such who 'have not the Spirit' are mere 'natural men.'

Of this natural man St Paul plainly and positively asserteth, he 'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.' Indeed, there are *τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, some things of God, which a natural man may know; but *τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the things of the Spirit of God, to wit, the truths which are purely evangelical, he receiveth not; nor is it said *οὐκ ἐπιβάσει*, but *οὐ δέχεται*. He doth not find them out, but when they are found out and revealed to him, he doth not receive them; nor is it only a reception of them into his will, but understanding, which is intended; for it followeth, 'he cannot know them.' Nor is it only said he *doth not*, but he *cannot*, it being impossible for him, merely by the help of natural reason, to attain the knowledge of them, and this because 'they are spiritually discerned;' that is, the Spirit of God, which revealeth them, must also enable to discern them. Indeed, Socinus would explain the *δέχεται* by *ἐπιβάσει*, he receiveth not, that is, he findeth not out the things of the Spirit of God. But this notion of the word findeth no parallel in the New Testament, nay, is against the nature of the thing; for *receiving* supposeth something offered, which, when it is applied to doctrines, the offering is the revealing them. Nor is it less incongruity to interpret this of St Paul, he 'receiveth not,' that is, he 'findeth not out,' than if one should expound that of St James, chap. i. 21, 'receive the engrafted word,' that is, 'find it out,' which will so much the more appear if you observe the reason annexed, why the natural man receiveth them not, to wit, because 'they are foolishness to him.' And if these things were to be found out, how could the natural man apprehend them to be foolishness? I have been so much the longer in the explication of

this scripture, because it is an explication of the text and the truth in hand.

For the prevention of these objections which may be made against, and the further confirmation of this position, be pleased to know that,

1. The reasonable creature is the subject of evangelical doctrine. This Spirit doth not bestow his oil upon trees and plants, beasts or birds; nor doth he raise up of stones and blocks children to Abraham. All divine knowledge is grafted upon the stock of natural reason.

2. By that native light of reason within us we may attain the knowledge of many things delivered in the gospel, those I mean which are common to the holy Scripture with other writings. How many things, historical, moral, speculative, practical, are there in the sacred books which we meet with in heathen authors! Our gracious God would not so overwhelm human infirmity in the paterfaction of evangelical mysteries, that there should be nothing for reason to fix upon; and yet withal he would not have all things so suitable to reason, that there should be no need of faith.

3. The literal sense of the Scripture words may through industry be attained to by the help of reason. Skill in the tongues, though it was for a time immediately and extraordinary conferred upon illiterate persons by the Holy Ghost, yet is such a gift as may be attained to by common helps; and the same industry which renders a man expert in giving the grammatical sense of other authors, may no doubt enable him to do the like in reading the books of the sacred penmen. Nay, more, the Spirit of God in Scripture doth not affect that obscurity of language which some other writers do, and so the sense of it may more easily be gathered.

4. The Spirit of God enlightening us to understand those truths which are purely evangelical, maketh use of reason. This *ἀνθος τῆς ψυχῆς*, flower of the soul, is not blasted, but rather the more opened, by the blowing of the blessed Spirit. When a man cometh to be initiated into the school of Christianity, he is not commanded to throw away his reason, only to subjugate it. Indeed, every Christian must deny his reason, but that is as he must deny his affections; as it is not the extirpating, but the moderating, of his affections, so it is not the casting away, but the captivating, of his reason to the obedience of faith, which Christian religion requireth. In one word, whilst the Spirit's grace is acknowledged to be *principium*, the principal efficient cause, I shall not deny reason to be *instrumentum*, an instrumental cause, whereby we come to the knowledge of divine things.

5. And therefore, lastly, this still remaineth as a snare maxin, that natural religion, by what help soever improved, is altogether insufficient, without the Spirit's grace, to the savoury apprehension of those supernatural and purely evangelical verities which are

\* Suidas in voce *ψυχικός*. Isid. Pelus. lib. iv. ep. 127.



revealed in the holy Scriptures. It is not unfitly observed, that as nature hath its secrets, and arts their crafts, so all religions have their mysteries, which are not known but to them who are brought up in them. It were easy to instance in the Persians, Indians, Syrians, Grecians, Egyptians, Romans, who had their mysterious rites, which the devil taught them; and accordingly were taken up in imitation of the true religion, which both in the Jewish and Christian church never wanted its mysteries, such as none can comprehend, neither can any apprehend, but those who are taught by the blessed Spirit.

This is expressly asserted by Christ himself when he saith to his disciples, Mat. xiii. 11, 'It is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom.' *Vobis datum, non vobiscum natum*, this knowledge is not *born with you*, but *given to you*. If, then, innate reason were sufficient, what need it be given? Nor is it only by outward revelation, for so it was to those scribes and pharisees, the wise and prudent, from whom yet those things are said to be hid, to wit, because their eyes were not spiritually enlightened to discern them. If you would know what it is that was given to those disciples, let one of them, the beloved disciple, inform you, and that in this very epistle, where he saith, 'The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true,' 1 John v. 10. So that not only the revelation of that we are to know, but the *διάνοια*, understanding itself, whereby we know, was given by Christ; and this as a peculiar grace conferred on some, whilst it is denied to others.

To this purpose tend those metaphors of 'opening the eyes,' Acts xxvi. 18, and opening the heart, chap. xvi. 14; plainly intimating that, in the work of conversion, there is not only an outward, but an inward, work. Nor are evangelical truths only revealed by the word, but the rational faculties are rectified by the Spirit. What more pregnant instance of this truth than Nicodemus, to whom the evangelical doctrine of regeneration was preached by Christ himself, John iii. 5, and yet by whom it was not understood for want of the Spirit's illumination? No wonder if God's promise to his people runs, Jer. xxiv. 7, 'I will give them an heart to know me;' without which, though he had shewed his word and statutes to them, they would still have continued ignorant, as to any spiritual and saving knowledge.

It is a known axiom in philosophy, that there must be a due proportion between the faculty and the object; and therefore as sense cannot apprehend the things of reason, so neither can reason the things of the Spirit, there being no proportion between natural

reason and spiritual verities. Indeed, reason in itself is a thing spiritual, as spiritual is opposite to material, but not as it is opposed to natural; and it must be a spiritual, that is, a supernatural, quality infused by the Spirit, which can enable us to apprehend supernatural objects. Suitable hereunto is that distinction in the schools of a threefold light—of nature, of grace, of glory—one whereof is far short of the other. And as the light of grace is not proportionable to those beatifical objects of glory, so neither is the light of nature to the spiritual objects of grace; and therefore most justly is this affirmative, 'you have an unction, and know all things,' construed as including the negative, if you had not this unction, you could not know anything.

To conclude, then, let the consideration hereof learn us a double lesson, to wit, of humility and prayer.

1. Let it abase us in our own estimation, notwithstanding our choicest natural or acquired abilities. 'Vain man' (saith Eliphaz, Job xi. 11) 'would be wise, though he be born like a wild ass's colt.' Men would be masters, not only of natural, but divine, knowledge; but they become vain in their imaginations. In reason, as corrupted, there is a direct enmity against the gospel's simplicity; yea, the line of reason at the best is too short to fathom the depth of evangelical mysteries; and therefore 'if any one would be wise, let him' (according to St Paul's counsel, 1 Cor. iii. 18) 'become a fool, that he may be wise.' He only is in a fit capacity for divine knowledge, who humbly acknowledgeth his own inability of himself to attain it.

2. As we desire to know all things needful to salvation, pray we for the Spirit's illumination. It is strange, and yet true, to consider how simple idiots are able more divinely to discourse of gospel verities than some learned clerks. And whence this but from this special unction of the renewing Spirit? And when we hear wicked Christians sometimes fluently uttering divine knowledge, whence is it but from the common unction of the illuminating Spirit? There is no unfolding Samson's riddle unless we plough with Samson's heifer, no understanding the things of the Spirit but by the grace of the Spirit, and therefore I shall end my discourse with the beginning of that excellent hymn,

O Holy Ghost! into our wits send down thy heavenly  
light,  
Kindle our hearts with fervent love to serve God day  
and night!

Amen.

## SERMON LI.

*I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*  
—1 JOHN II. 21.

THIS verse may well be called a religious compliment, inserted by the apostle, no doubt, for this end, that he might the better gain upon those to whom he wrote.\* That piece of oratory which teacheth *captare benevolentiam*, to seek the good will of auditors, is of good use in divinity.† They are too morose and rigid who account all civil language in a pulpit, daubing with untempered mortar. St Paul, doubtless, did not court Agrippa with a falsehood when he saith, Acts xxvi. 27, 'Believest thou the prophets? I know thou believest them;' nor did he give rotten posts when he saith to those Hebrews, Heb. vi. 9, 'I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak.' Far be it from St John, who declaimeth against liars, at the same time to be guilty of flattery, which is no better than lying. To soothe up our hearers in their wickedness is abominable, but to smooth them with oily language and silken words, that they may be more pliable to what is good, is allowable, whilst herein we trace the footsteps of the penmen of holy writ, particularly St John, and that in this verse, which is as it were an insinuating parenthesis, 'I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth,' &c.

In which words there are three generals observable:

I. A delineation of the gospel by a double character.

1. Principal and direct, in that it is called the *truth*.

2. Collateral and consequential, when it is said, *no lie is of the truth*.

II. A commendation of the Christians to whom the apostle wrote, by removing ignorance from them, attributing knowledge to them, in those words, 'not because you know not the truth, but because ye know it,' &c.

III. An anticipation of an objection which might be made against his writing to them who were thus knowing, in those words, 'I have not written unto you,' &c.

I. Begin we with the delineation, and therein,

1. The principal character, which, though comprised in that one word *truth*, carrieth in it a great deal of weight.

Not to trouble you with the philosophical distinctions of truth, be pleased to know to our present purpose,

(1.) As there is a double word, so there is a double truth, to wit, personal and doctrinal. Our blessed Saviour saith of himself, 'I am the truth,' John xiv. 6; and some interpreters conceive that by truth here

the apostle meaneth Christ. When our Saviour prayeth for his disciples, John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth,' he presently addeth, 'thy word is truth;' and accordingly others expound truth here to be the evangelical doctrine. To this latter interpretation I rather adhere, because it is most probable that St John understands the same by *truth* in this verse, which he intends by *all things* in the former, and those are all things revealed in the gospel.

(2.) Truth may be construed in a double opposition, either to that which is typical, or that which is false.

[1.] Sometimes the truth is opposed to types and ceremonies. Thus, when we are required, John iv. 16, to 'worship the Father in spirit and in truth;' as the former is opposed to hypocritical, so the latter most rationally to ceremonial worship. And when it is said, John i. 17, 'The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,' we may probably conceive the sense to be, that whereas Moses only delivered precepts to be done, Christ giveth by his Spirit grace to do them; and whereas the ceremonial law consisted only of types and shadows, the truth, that is, the impletion of all those, is now performed by Christ. Accordingly, the gospel is the truth, because it revealeth the body of those shadows, the mystery of those figures, the substance of those types; and to this Zanchy conceiveth the apostle Paul might have respect, when he calls it, 'the word of truth,' Eph. i. 12.

[2.] Sometimes the truth is opposed to falsehood and lies,\* for that is the most genuine significance of the word, and withal the most rational interpretation of it in this place, where we find *a lie* expressly set in opposition to it. Upon this account, no doubt, it is that the gospel is so frequently styled the 'word of truth,' Col. i. 4, and the 'way of truth,' 2 Tim. ii. 15, and 'the truth,' 2 Peter ii. 2. To this purpose is that metaphorical phrase of St Peter, 1 Peter i. 23, where he calls it 'the sincere milk of the word,' to wit, without any base mixture of falsehood. Indeed, there are some doctrines of the gospel which are not *verisimilia*, probable to our reason, but still all of them are *verissima*, of most certain verity.

For the clearer manifestation whereof (which was never more needful than in this sceptical, yea, atheistical age), and that in opposition to all other doctrines whatsoever, be pleased to consider the matter, the witness, the miracles, and the success of the evangelical doctrine.

1. The matter of the gospel proclaimeth it to be the truth, inasmuch as it layeth down surer principles,

\* Zanch. *ibid*.

\* Valent hæc ad conciliandam benevolentiam magnopere.  
—*Lor. in loc.*

† Vide Calv. in loc.



purser precepts, and higher promises than any other doctrine whatsoever. This is that doctrine which maketh full provision for our comfort, by teaching us how God and man may be brought together, how justice and mercy may meet each other, by proposing to us such a reward, which, for its excellency and perpetuity, is every way adequate to a rational desire. This is that doctrine which giveth full direction for our obedience, by enjoining such duties as are most just and pure, and so most consonant to right reason.

2. The testimony given to the historical part of this doctrine, especially that of Christ's resurrection, (which, if acknowledged true, there will be no reason to deny the truth of anything revealed in the gospel) is so valid that there need not, could not, be a clearer evidence.\* For however they were persons *tenuioris fortune*, of a mean estate, yet they were *inculpate famæ*, of unblemished credit. Nor was it only one or two, but a great number of men and women who testified the truth of it, and this not upon hearsay, but as that which they had seen with their eyes, and their hands had handled; nor (which would not be left out) was there any hope of profit or preferment, which might induce them to attest a falsehood.

3. The miracles which accompanied those oracles were such as abundantly confirm their truth; for, though it is true, the publishers of lying doctrines have, by the devil's help, wrought wonders, yet either they were (as St Paul calls them) 'lying wonders,' mere delusions, making things appear which are not, by corrupting sometimes the fancy, sometimes the sense, sometimes the air, and sometimes the object; or, if they were true wonders, yet they were not miracles properly so called, because not above the power of nature; only the devil, either by his agility removing of, or bringing on objects upon the stage in a moment (as it was probably in the magician's imitation of Moses, when he turned rods into serpents), or by his sagacity discovering the secrets of nature, oftentimes effects such things as to us, being unknown, are wonderful, though indeed they are but natural. But the wonders which were wrought by the preachers of the gospel plainly appear to be such as either no created power can at all effect, as raising the dead, curing the blind, lame, and deaf, which were so out of a natural defect in the organ, and are reckoned among those total privations which, in course of nature, admit of no return to the habit, or which, if a natural virtue can effect, yet not in that way and time, as the healing of the sick by a touch, by a word, at a distance, in an instant, and therefore were no other than divine miracles. So that, unless we will suppose that the true God would confirm a lie by signs and wonders, we must needs acknowledge the truth of the gospel.

4. Lastly, the wonderful success which this doctrine hath had in the world may very rationally evince its

\* See more of this, Sermon V.

truth. It is a known saying, *Veritas magna et prevalet*, the power of truth is unconquerable, and though sometimes it may be suppressed, yet it cannot be extinguished. Indeed, it is not true reciprocally that though truth will prevail at last, yet every doctrine which prevaileth for a time is truth. If this plea were sufficient, nakedly considered, the Mahometan doctrine would challenge this title of truth, as having gained upon the greatest part of the habitable world for many hundred years. It is not, therefore, simply the strength, but the strangeness of the gospel's prevalency, which argues its verity. That the Mahometan doctrine should be generally embraced is no wonder, partly because it is a doctrine congruous to man's corrupt inclination: it was at first propagated, and is still maintained, by force of arms. But that the evangelical doctrine, which teacheth lessons contrary to flesh and blood, liberality to a covetous, humility to a proud, piety to a profane, and righteousness to a cruel world, which was so much opposed and persecuted by the wise and great men, the princes of this world, should be published by twelve illiterate, unarmed men, who had not spears, but only staves in their hands, not swords, but scrips by their sides, and were as a few sheep among a multitude of ravenous wolves, and yet the publishing should be so effectual as to gain a multitude of disciples in all parts, and those such as did, many of them, lose their liberties, states, and lives in defence of it, is so strange a success as may very well be a strong argument to testify the truth of the gospel. By all which it appeareth what good reason St John had to call the gospel *the truth*, in opposition to falsehood.

But yet this is not all which this title prompts us to; for in that the apostle doth not say 'the true doctrine' in the concrete, but 'the truth' in the abstract, so that whereas there are many other truths which every art and science teacheth, he seemeth to appropriate it to the evangelical doctrine, as if that only deserved the name of truth, is very emphatical; and no doubt his intention hereby is to let us see that the gospel is eminently and transcendently true. Indeed, *veritas consistit in indivisibili*, one thing cannot be truer than another, but yet one truth may be of greater eminency than another. Such is the doctrine of the gospel, whose excellency will appear if you consider that it is a divine, an universal, and an effectual truth.

Well may the gospel be called the truth, inasmuch as it is,

1. The *divine* truth, which was dictated to those who published it by the Spirit of God. I grant, as St Ambrose saith, *omnis veritas à Spiritu sancto*, all, even human truth, is from the divine Spirit; in which respect truth is called by the Greek poet\* the daughter of God, but still it is only scriptural truth which is of immediate inspiration. All truth calls

\* *Θυγάτηρ Δίος*.—Pind. *Olymp.*

God Father, but this is his *Reuben*, his first-born, 'These things saith he that is true;' and again, 'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness,' so run the prefaces of the two epistles to Philadelphia and Laodicea, Rev. iii. 14, 17; and accordingly St Peter, 2 Peter i. 21, 'They spake as moved by the Holy Ghost.' Indeed, if you please to review three of the fore-mentioned arguments, to wit, the matter, the miracles, and success of this doctrine, you shall find them proving as well the divinity as the verity of the gospel.

2. An *universal* truth, such as containeth in it all truth needful to be known in order to salvation. Indeed, there are many natural truths which are below the majesty and beside the scope of the gospel, and therefore are not contained in it; but all saving truths, either *formaliter* or *reductivè*, in express words or plain necessary consequences, are revealed by the gospel. Hence it is that this doctrine is as it were a rule or standard by which all doctrines must be tried, so that 'if an angel preach any other gospel, he is accursed,' Gal. i. 8; for which reason, no doubt, it is called a *canon* by St Paul, where he saith, Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule (or canon), peace be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.'

3. Lastly, An *effectual* truth, the truth which of all others hath the most powerful operation. Indeed, as it was inspired by, so the preaching of it is still accompanied with, the Holy Spirit, whereby it hath a far greater efficacy than any other truth whatsoever; for whereas other truths have only an influence upon the understanding, this, together with the understanding, hath an influence upon the will and affections. Other truths may make us wise, but this will make us both wise and better. 'Glorious things are spoken of thee,' O thou celestial truth: John viii. 32, 'The truth shall make you free'; John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth,' they are Christ's own words; James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth'; so St Peter. All truth is God's daughter, but this is as it were his spouse, by which he begets sons and daughters to himself. In one word, it is this truth, and this alone, which doth so enlighten the mind as to incline the will, regulate the passions, comfort the conscience, renew our nature, and sanctify our whole man. No wonder if our apostle call it abstractively *truth*, and emphatically *the truth*.

Having given you this account of the principal, it will be easy to infer the collateral character of the gospel, where it is said, 'No lie is of the truth.' In the Greek it seemeth to be a particular proposition, 'Every lie is not of the truth;' but it is equivalent to an universal, and therefore is fitly rendered, 'No lie is of the truth.' To open the sense briefly.

1. There is a threefold lie, verbal, practical, doctrinal. Verbal is an untrue narration, when we either affirm what is false, or deny what is true; practical is an unsuitable conversation, when we unsay with our lives

what we say with our lips; doctrinal is an erroneous position concerning matters of faith or practice; and though it be true of all sort of lies, yet no doubt it is the doctrinal lie which is here chiefly intended.

2. Whereas it is possible upon false hypotheses to infer true conclusions (whence it is usual in astronomy, by supposing things that are not, to demonstrate the truth of things that are), it is impossible from true positions to infer a false conclusion. Indeed, too often wicked heretics fasten their lies upon the evangelical truth, and for this reason probably St John inserteth this clause (which at first may seem supervacaneous) that whereas the antichristian teachers might pretend to boast of the truth, our apostle assurheth those to whom he wrote that the truth did not, could not, father any such lies. The truth is, when heretics endeavour to prove their doctrines by Scripture, they deal by it as Caligula did by the image of Jupiter Olympiacus, when he took from it its own head, which was of gold, and put upon it one of brass; they spoil truth of its genuine sense to put upon it a corrupt gloss, it being as possible for cold to come from heat, or darkness from light, as any lie from the truth.

3. Nor yet is this all that this clause imports. *Minus dicit, plus volens intelligi*, saith Estius,\* our apostle intends more than he speaketh; for whereas he saith, 'No lie is of the truth,' he meaneth every lie is against the truth. Indeed, some lies have a semblance of truth, and are so bold as to claim kindred to it; but notwithstanding their seeming consonancy, there is a real repugnancy, and they are so far from being of, that they are contrary to, the truth.

To close up this first general. Since the gospel is the truth, and consequently no lie is of it, learn we to embrace it with those two arms of faith and love.

1. Let us stedfastly believe it. The heathen had an high opinion of their sybils, as appeareth by that of the poet,†

*Credite me folium vobis recitare sybillæ;*

and shall not we yield a firm credence to the gospel? St Paul saith of the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 5, that 'the gospel came not to them only in word, but in power, and in the holy Ghost, and in much assurance,' intimating that they had not only a conjectural opinion, but a full persuasion of the truth of the gospel. Let the same confidence be in us. It is the truth, and therefore we may infallibly venture our souls upon it; 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, before the least jot of it shall be found false and lying.'

2. Let us affectionately love it, so as not only to yield obedience to, but contend in the defence of it, whensoever we are called to it. The heathen in their sacrifices to Apollo cried out, *γλυκύς ἡ ἀλήθεια*, truth is sweet. Let us say with David of this truth, 'Oh how sweet it is to my taste: it is sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb.' *Veritas Christianorum incom-*

\* Est. in loc.

† Juvenal.



*paribilibiter pulchrior Helenâ Græcorum*, saith St Austin, the Christian's truth is incomparably fairer than the Helen of Greece; and if the Grecians so hotly strove for the one, how zealously should we contend for the other. We may venture our souls on it, and we must be willing to venture our states and bodies for it; and as he said, though upon another account, *Amicus Plato, Amicus Aristoteles, sed magis amica veritas*, Plato and Aristotle are my friends, but truth much more, so let us in this, My liberty, my life, is dear to me, but the truth of the gospel is far dearer. And that we may thus believe and love, let us be careful to know it, for which it is that our apostle praiseth these Christians. And so I am fallen on the

II. Commendation, 'not because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it;' whence it will not be amiss to observe,

1. In general, that this holy apostle is not awanting in just praises of those to whom he writeth. Very often in this epistle he calls them 'little children,' and in this he dealeth with them as with little children, who are best won upon by encouraging commendations. It was one of St Jerome's counsels to *Læta*\* about the bringing up of her daughter, *Laudibus excitandum est ingenium*, that she should excite her by praises.

When the schoolmaster, by commending his scholar for doing well, lets him see that he hath a good opinion of him, it is a notable spur to put him upon preserving and increasing that good opinion by doing better. What the blowing of the horn is to the hounds in their chase, and the sounding of the trumpet to the horse in the battle, that is praise to men in their prosecution of virtue, and opposition against vice. And therefore, let all ministers learn to take notice of, and encourage the forwardness of their people, and let them be no less careful to extol their virtues than to reprove their vices. When the people do what is commendable, it is but just we should commend what they do; and if they find matter, let not us want words in giving men their deserved praises, according to the pattern which here St John sets us.

2. In special, take a view of the commendation here given, which is first by way of remotion, acquitting them from ignorance. They were not like St Paul's filthy women, which were 'ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,' 2 Tim. iii. 7, nor like those Hebrews who, 'whereas for the time they ought to have been teachers, they had need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God,' Heb. v. 12; they were not such as did not know the truth. And then, by way of attribution, asserting that they were such who did know the truth, yea, that they had a distinct knowledge of it, whereby they were able to distinguish between truth and falsehood, for that *you know* is very fitly by interpreters supplied in the last clause, 'you know that no lie is of the truth.' Our blessed Saviour, speaking of his sheep, John x. 3, 4, saith, they 'know his voice,'

\* Hier. Ep. ad Læt.

and that so as to distinguish it from the 'voice of strangers;' for so it followeth, 'and a stranger will they not follow.' Thus doth St John here commend these Christians, not only for a true, but a clear, knowledge, whereby they were able to judge aright, and discern between things that differ. Indeed, according to that known maxim, *rectum est index sui et obliqui*, that which is true discovers not only itself, but that which is false, and therefore he that knoweth the truth knows that no lie is of it.

That it may the better appear how high a commendation this is, it will be needful to discuss a little, on the one hand, the evil of ignorance; and on the other, the good of knowledge.

1. Not to know the truth is a sin sadly to be bemoaned, and such as contracts not only guilt but shame upon the person. Indeed, this is not true of all kinds of ignorance.

There is an ignorance which is commendable, not to know what God hath kept secret, because he would not have us know. It is no shame for a man not to know that which is not in his possibility, and such are all those things which God hath not been pleased to reveal.

There is an ignorance which is excusable, to wit, 1, when it is of such truths which are without our sphere, and therefore have no need to know them; 2, when it is of such truths as are polemical, problematical, which, partly by reason of the difficulty of the matter, and partly by reason of the imbecility of our understanding, we cannot attain to a full knowledge of; 3, when, though it be of the evangelical truth, yet it is either through a defect of revelation, which is the only means whereby we can know it, as in pagans, who never heard of the gospel, and therefore shall not be condemned for not knowing and believing it, or through a natural incapacity, as in infants, and fools, and madmen, who, being not able to make use of their reason, cannot attain to this knowledge.

But not to know in some measure the necessary truths of the gospel, notwithstanding the opportunities and means of knowledge afforded to us, is an ignorance deservedly blameable. Indeed, it is *negligentia non impotentia, incuria non incapacitas*, not an impotent incapacity, but a reckless negligence; it is not an invincible, but a vincible, not a negative, but a privative, not an involuntary, but a wilful ignorance, not of one who would but cannot, but one who may but will not, know the truth. And now to be thus ignorant is our sin, our shame, our ruin. What a traveller is without his feet, a workman without his hands, a painter without his eyes, that is a Christian without knowledge, unable to do the will of God. What danger a ship is in that wants a rudder, ballast, anchors, cables, sails, the like is he in who wants knowledge. How easily is he tossed up and down with every wind of doctrine! how unable we are to steer a right course toward heaven! how quickly he is overturned into a gulf of errors and vices! No wonder if God complain by

the prophet Hosca, chap. iv. 6, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.' Our proverb saith, The blind man swalloweth many a fly, and catcheth many a fall. It is no less true of an ignorant Christian; he swalloweth many an error, and falls into many a sin. This jawbone of an ass, I mean ignorance, hath slain its thousands, laying heaps upon heaps; in a word, almighty God is so far provoked with affected ignorance that he threateneth by his prophet, Isa. xxvii. 11, 'It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour;' and by his apostle, 2 Thes. i. 8, that 'the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God.'

2. To know the truth, and that no lie is of it, is a virtue highly to be commended. Indeed, there is an excellency in all kind of knowledge; it is a pearl despised of none but fools, knowledge having no enemy but the ignorant. Alexander was wont to say, he had rather excel in knowledge than be great in power.\* Indeed, what the eye is in the body, that is knowledge in the mind; that the choicest member of the one, this the noblest ornament of the other; but surely this knowledge whereof my text speaks is far more excellent than all other knowledge whatsoever, for whereas by knowledge it is that a man differeth from a beast, by this knowledge it is that a Christian differeth from other men. *Nullus omnino cibus suavior quam cognitio veritatis*, saith Lactantius, no sweeter food to the mind than the knowledge of truth, and especially of this truth. What the foundation is to the building, the root to the tree, that is this knowledge to the soul, the beginning of all grace and goodness; what the sun is to the world, that is this knowledge to the mind, to enlighten, enliven, and rejoice it. If that philosopher, when he had gained a new notion in astronomy, was so ravished, that he cried out, *εὕρηκα, εὕρηκα*, I have found it, I have found it, how much greater joy hath the Christian, knowing supernatural truths! In a word, this knowledge is not only that which leads to grace and joy, but glory. St Paul hath put them together, when he saith, 1 Tim. ii. 4, 'God would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth, that they may be saved.' No wonder if St John accounted those Christians praiseworthy for this, that they did know the truth.

And now, I would to God that we could say the same of all our hearers; but I fear, in regard of too many, we may, instead of commending, condemn, of praising complain, that they are not such as do know the truth, but do not know it. Our language may not be this of St John's, but that of St Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 34, 'Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame.' Indeed, a shame it is

that any among us should be ignorant; for, to allude to the apostle's phrase, Rom. xi. 18, 'Have they not heard? yea, the sound has gone throughout all the land.' All means of knowledge, preaching, catechising, writing, are plentifully afforded. God may say to us, as he did to his people of old, Jer. ii. 31, 'Have I been a wilderness to the house of Israel, a land of darkness?' And yet how many remain destitute of saving knowledge! It might have been said of this land for these many years, in regard of the gospel, what is said of Rhodes in regard of the sun, *Semper in sole sita est Rhodos*, it is always in the sunshine. The light of truth hath shone gloriously among us; and yet how many owls fly up and down in this bright firmament! how many beetles in this Goshen land of light! Lactantius observeth, that there was never less wisdom in Greece than in the time of the seven wise men; and they say of the Indians, among whom all the gold is, that none are more meanly clad than they. Oh that even in this land, which hath equalised, if not excelled, all other parts of the Christian world for perspicuous instruction, there were not to be found many grossly ignorant. The truth is,

1. Some, though they be strangely ignorant, are highly conceited of (than which no greater enemy to) their knowledge. The opinion of having attained knowledge, as it is an argument that a man hath not attained, and therefore, saith St Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 2, 'He that thinketh he knoweth anything, knoweth nothing as he ought to know;' so it keepeth a man from endeavouring to attain, and therefore saith Solomon, Prov. xxvi. 12, 'Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit; there is more hope of a fool than of him.'

2. Some who are sensible of their ignorance, are yet ashamed to discover it, and therefore they seek it not at the priest's lips. Hence it is that whilst you frequently consult with the lawyer, to know the certainty of your evidences; and with the physician, to be informed in the state of your body; yet you seldom or never repair to the minister, to inquire of, and be informed by him in the things that concern your soul.

3. Too many look upon divine knowledge as a thing to which only the divine is obliged, they need not trouble themselves about it. If the merchant can but know how to keep his accounts, how to import and export his wares; if the tradesman can but skill how to buy and sell, and get gain; if the husbandman can but learn how to manure his ground, it matters not for the mystery of godliness, and knowledge of the truth.

4. Nay, I would to God there were not some, who do not only neglect, but reject this knowledge, saying, with those profane atheists, to God, We 'desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14; and that they may continue in their ignorance, they either content themselves without any, or with some blind guide,

\* Plut. Apophth. Lactant. Instit. lib. i. cap. i.



who, instead of teaching others, had need himself to be a catechumen.

Suffer, I beseech you, the word of exhortation, to answer the means with some measure of knowledge. Philip rejoiced that Alexander was born in the days of Aristotle. Let us bless God that we are born in the times of light; and since God is not awaiting to us, let not us be awaiting to ourselves. Wait at the posts of wisdom's house, sit at the feet of your teachers, and inquire what you know not from their mouths; diligently peruse the holy Scriptures, the rich cabinet in which this jewel, the knowledge of the truth, is to be found; purge your hearts of arrogant self-conceit, taste the sweetness of divine truths, obediently practise what you know; so shall you more and more know what to practise; above all, according to Solomon's advice, Prov. ii. 3, 'Cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding.' What St Paul prays for the Ephesians, Eph. i. 18, beg of God for thyself, that 'the eyes of thy understanding may be enlightened.' And when thou hast attained the knowledge of the truth, be not proud, but humble, still acknowledging thy need of further helps, by the tongues and pens of God's ministers, as St John here intimateth, in that he saith, 'I have written unto you, because you know,' which leads to the

III. Anticipation of an objection, which might arise in their minds from that which is asserted in the preceding verse: If we have an unction by which we know all things, to what end, might they say, or at least think, is your writing? Which objection he prevents by adding, 'I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it.'

Some expositors conceive these words to be an apology for his writing so little. *Alioqui largiore vobiscum usus essem sermone*,\* so Grotius, If you had not known the truth, I would have written more largely to you; but *verbum sapienti sat est*, a word is enough to the wise; and doubtless, it is a piece of prudence in a minister, to make a distinction between auditories: when they speak to the simple and ignorant, to use more plain, large, and loose expressions; but when to intelligent Christians, more concise, pithy, and exact.

The generality of interpreters conceive this an apology for his writing at all, which might seem supervacaneous to those who, by virtue of a divine unction, knew so much already, wherein our apostle lets them know, that notwithstanding the knowledge they had attained, it was still needful to write to them, and that *because* they had attained this knowledge. In particular, there might be a threefold reason of St John's writing to those knowing Christians.

1. *In memoriam revocare*, to bring that truth to their memory which had been already imprinted in

\* Grot in loc.

their understanding.\* Upon this account, as St John here, so elsewhere, the other apostles expressly apologise for themselves. 'I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this;' so St Jude, ver. 5. 'I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth;' so St Peter, 2 Peter i. 12. 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God;' so St Paul, Rom. xv. 14, 15. The truth is, we are very apt to forget what we know. 'Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children,' saith the apostle, Heb. xii. 5. Our memories are like sieves, that let go the flour and retain the bran; we remember what is to be forgotten, and forget what is to be remembered. Need there is we should be minded.

2. *Scientiam augere*, to increase our knowledge. The truth is, the greatest part of the things we know, is the least part of what we do not know. No truths are so well, but they may be better known. Every command is exceeding broad, and every article very deep, nor can any say, There is nothing contained in either which I do not fully know. *Disce docendus adhuc*, was good counsel, be still willing to learn. Luther confessed himself *catechismi discipulum*, a scholar to the catechism. The most knowing Christian hath need to be instructed even in the things he knoweth.

3. *In veritate confirmare*, to confirm us in the truth we know. *Notitiam vobis concedo, sed de constantia vestra sollicitus sum*, so Aretius† glosseth, I grant you are knowing Christians, but I am solicitous for your constancy in the faith. We are but too prone to waver in our profession, and too weak holdfasts in spiritual truths; *etiam currentibus addenda sunt calcaria*, though we run well, we need spurring to make us hold out, or else we should grow dull and weary. So that in all these respects there appears sufficient reason why our apostle wrote even to them that knew the truth.

I end all. Take heed how any of you vilify the ministry of the word, either preached or written. They are words too often in many men's mouths, I know as much as the preacher can tell me. Dost thou so? I rejoice in it, but still the preacher may remember thee of, and confirm thee in, what thou knowest; and perhaps thou mayest learn from him to know it better. Believe it, there is use of evangelical preaching, and apostolical writing, not only to inform the simple, and instruct the ignorant, but to mind the forgetful, strengthen the weak, and supply defects either of knowledge or affection, or both, in

\* Illyr. in loc., Carthus. in loc.

† Aret. in loc.

the most knowing Christian, which made our apostle thus bespeak the Christians in his time, 'I have not

written unto you because you know not the truth, but because you know it.'

### SERMON LII.

*Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*—1 JOHN II. 22, 23.

THE knowledge of the disease is the better part of the cure; and therefore the physician's skill is more seen in discovering the malady than in prescribing the remedy. The greatest danger of a ship at sea is by reason of unseen shelves, unknown rocks, and therefore the pilot's chiefest care is, by his own and others' experience, to learn upon what coast they lie. Finally, an enemy discovered is half vanquished; and therefore it is the saying of Chabrias in Plutarch,\* He is the best general who is most acquainted with the designs and motions of his enemy. Upon this consideration no doubt it is that our apostle, having before in general admonished those to whom he writeth of these antichristian enemies, doth here more particularly discover their heresies to us, whereby they might at once be more easily discerned and avoided. 'Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?'

In these two verses we have two generals:

A description of the heretics in St John's days, in the two-and-twentieth verse, 'Who is a liar,' &c.

An amplification of that description as to the latter part of it, in the three-and-twentieth verse, 'Whosoever denieth the Son,' &c.

1. In the description we shall consider a

(1.) Double appellation with which he brandeth them, in those words, 'Who is a liar?' and 'he is antichrist.'

(2.) Double accusation which he chargeth upon them, of denying that Jesus is the Christ, and denying the Father and the Son.

(1.) Begin we with the appellations, which are two, *liar* and *antichrist*.

[1.] The latter of these is that which hath been discussed already from the eighteenth verse, and therefore shall now be only touched.

That the *ὁ ἀντιχριστός* doth not here design that person or party, to which this title is by divines particularly attributed, will sufficiently appear by what is already said in the fore-mentioned verse; and accordingly Calvin† is express: The apostle speaketh not here of that man of sin who shall sit in the temple of God. So that it is most rationally conceived as a title given to those many heretical teachers which were apostatised from the church even in the apostle's days.

There are *Christiani sine Christo*, Christians with-

out Christ; such are all they who, professing his name, have no real interest in him. But here are *Christiani contra Christum*, Christians against Christ; so far degenerated from their Christian profession as to set themselves in direct opposition to Christ. That the Jews and heathens should be antichrists is no wonder; but that such who had been baptised into Christ, yea, had preached Christ, should apostatise to a renouncing of him, renders them so much the more antichristian; and perhaps for this reason the apostle prefixeth the emphatical article, for whereas the Jews and heathens were antichrists, because not knowing, they never owned, but opposed him; these were such as knowing had professed him, but either through fear of men, or love of the world, or, which is worst of all, desperate malice, not only deserted, but rejected him.

[2.] The former of the titles is not only asserted, but, as Gualter well observeth,\* by way of interrogation amplified, it is not, 'he is a liar who denieth,' but 'who is a liar but he that denieth?' which is as much as to say, If he be not a liar, none is, according to that expression which we sometimes use, (as Estius well observeth †) by way of aggravation, What is wickedness if this be not? So that our apostle hereby affirmeth of these antichristian teachers, that they were egregious, notorious liars; for so Beda glosseth, ‡ *In hujus comparatione mendacii, cetera aut parva videntur, aut nulla*, in comparison of this lie, others are small, or none at all.

There are two things which denominate a man an odious liar: the one, when that which is affirmed or denied is evidently contrary to truth; and the other, when the thing so asserted is injurious and pernicious to them that believe it. And truly both these may justly be charged on the liars in the text; for they denied that which was in itself manifest, yea, which they themselves had been convinced of; and that which they denied tended to no less than the utter subversion of the Christian faith, and the destruction of those who adhered to it. And therefore no wonder if St John, by way of question, accense the heretics in his time, of lying: 'Who is a liar?' &c.

That which I shall briefly observe from both these titles is the zeal of this holy apostle in reproving these heretics. Liars are *execrabile hominum genus*, a most execrable sort of men, hated and abhorred of all. Nor is a liar more odious among all men than an anti-

\* Plut. Apophth.

† Calv. in loc.

\* Gualt. in loc.

† Est. in loc.

‡ Beda, ibid.



christ is among all Christians; so that our apostle could not well have branded them with names more odious than these. The truth is, two sorts of sinners are severely to be rebuked, hypocrites and heretics. An example of the former we have from Christ himself, who, reprehending the hypocritical Pharisees, calls them fools and vipers; and of the latter in St John, who, gainsaying the heretical teachers of his time, calls them antichrists and liars.

Indeed, in one of those titles, is a latent reason of his bitterness against them, namely, because they were against Christ. Had they been only his antagonists, no doubt he would have been mild and gentle, but his Master's honour was concerned in the quarrel, no wonder if he be so zealous. Moses, the meekest man upon earth in his own concerns, is so enraged against the Israelites for their idolatry, that he breaketh the tables of the law. The historian observeth of Cæsar's soldiers, that they pursued their general's engagements with vigour, whilst they were cool and temperate in their own concerns; and surely, though towards our own adversaries we must shew meekness, yet when they are not only ours, but Christ's enemies, it becomes us to testify our love to Christ by our indignation against them. It was an excellent saying of Guevara, in an epistle to the emperor Charles the Fifth, *Christianus nulli re magis dignosci potest, quam si Deo factus contumelias et blasphemias severissime ulciscatur, suas obliviscatur*, there is no better character of a right Christian than to forget the injuries done to himself, but to be angry at the blasphemies against God and Christ.

And which serveth so much the more to justify our apostle's severity in reproving those false teachers is, that they were not obliquely, but directly, opposers of Christ; they were such who did not only endeavour to lop off the branches of Christianity, but to pluck it up by the roots; to deface the building of religion, but to destroy the foundation. As there is a difference in sins, so in errors; all diseases are not alike malignant, nor all errors equally pestiferous; every heterodox opinion is not a sufficient warrant to brand a man with these appellations of liar and antichrist; but when they were so heretical as to deny Jesus to be the Christ, no marvel if this holy apostle, not out of a rash bitterness, but a well-grounded zeal, use these harsh invectives. It is a frame of spirit which we find in other servants of God as well as St John. The apostle Paul having to do with Elymas, spares him not, but calls him a child of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness, Acts xiii. 10. And writing to the Philippians concerning heretical teachers, calleth them the 'conscience,' and compareth them to dogs, Philip. iii. 2. No less satirical was that of Polycarpus to Marcion, *Agnoſco te primogenitum diaboli*, I know thee to be the devil's first-born. Let the same spirit be in us in oppugning the authors and abettors of damnable heresies. The visible descend-

ing of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles was in fiery tongues; such tempers had they, yea, all their successors, the bishops and pastors of the church, ought to have tongues set on fire from heaven, which may flame forth in vehement increpations, as of notorious sinners, so of venomous heretics.

2. From the appellations proceed we to the accusations.

The first whereof we find to be denying that Jesus is the Christ; in which words there is,

A truth implicitly asserted by the apostle, *Jesus is the Christ*.

A heresy explicitly charged on the false teachers, namely, the denial of this truth, *he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ*.

1. When our apostle saith, 'Who is a liar but he that denieth?' what doth he but tacitly affirm this to be a truth, that Jesus is the Christ? And because it is a fundamental truth, upon which the whole fabric of Christian religion standeth, give me leave a while to insist upon it, not as questioning, but for the further strengthening your assent to it; so much the rather, because of the multitude of Jews, which are at this time crept in among us, whom, though I have little hope to convince, yet I would strive to prevent in those secret endeavours (which probably they use) to seduce Christians from the faith of Christ.

That there was such a man as Jesus of Nazareth, born and living among the Jews, is an history so authentic, that there will be no need of spending time about the proof of it. It is acknowledged by the Jews themselves, witness Josephus in his Jewish Antiquities,\* where he maketh an honourable mention of him, in these words, At that time was Jesus, a wise man (if it be lawful to call him man), &c. It is confessed by pagans: Suetonius, in the life of Claudius, † speaketh of him by the name of *Chrestus*; Tacitus, and Pliny the younger, acknowledged him by the name *Christus*. ‡ And surely that which not only his followers but his enemies confess, may well be taken for granted.

The only difficulty is to make it appear, that this Jesus that then lived is *the Christ*; that is, the person whom Moses and the prophets foretold to be the Messiah. To this end, the only thing to be done is an inquiry into the predictions concerning the Messiah, which, if they be found verified in this Jesus, and no other person can be assigned in whom they are verified, it will be clearly manifest that Jesus is the Christ. This way of arguing I so much the rather make choice of, because it is that which Christ himself directs us, when he bids the Jews to search the Scriptures, John v. 39, that is, the Old Testament (which then was the only written word), upon this account, 'for they

\* Joseph. Antiqu. lib. xviii. cap. xiv.

† Sueton. lib. v. Plin. Jun. lib. x. ep. 97.

‡ Tacit. lib. xv.

are they that testify of me; thereby putting the controversy to this issue, that if he were not the person of whom the Scripture did testify as the Messiah, let him be accounted an impostor and deceiver. Accordingly it is that his apostles, in their discourses concerning him, still have recourse to the prophetic writings. Thus, St Paul saith of himself, Rom. i. 12, that he was 'separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures.' And concerning his doctrine, Acts xxvi. 22, that he 'said no other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.' For this reason it was, no doubt, that St Peter wills those to whom he writeth, 2 Peter i. 19, that they should 'take heed to the sure word of prophecy, as to a light that shineth in a dark place.'

In this comparing of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, with the history of Jesus, I shall not mention all, nor yet largely insist on those I shall mention, so as to vindicate them from all cavils; since then, this one discourse would swell to a volume; and besides, it hath been abundantly done by the learned already; only I shall run over the principal, and that in such a way as (I hope) will strengthen the Christian, if not convince the gainsayer.

The prophecies of the Messiah which we meet with in the Old Testament, are such as concern his birth, doctrine, miracles, offices, sufferings, and exaltation, all which will, upon due search, be found true in Jesus.

1. Concerning the Messiah's *birth*, there are four sorts of predictions, referring to the time, the place, the tribe, the manner.

(1.) The first prophecy we meet with concerning the time of the Messiah's coming into the world, is that of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10, where he saith, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.' That by *Shiloh* is meant the Messiah, may appear, in that it is so rendered by the threefold Targum of Onkelos, Jonathan, and Jerusalem; and withal, the periphrasis annexed (to him shall be the gathering of the people) can agree to none but him. Now that which Jacob asserteth concerning the Messiah is, that there should not be a total extirpation of all civil power in the tribe of Judah, before the Messiah came; and thence it necessarily followeth that the extirpation of the civil power is a sure note of the Messiah's being come.

(2.) Another prophecy concerning the Messiah's advent we meet with in Daniel, and it is uttered by an angel: 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the com-

mandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: shall the street be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off; but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined,' Dan. ix. 24-26. Where the angel plainly affirmeth, among many other things, that the Messiah should come, and be cut off, before the destruction of the city and the sanctuary; whence it is naturally inferred that the actual overthrow of the city and sanctuary is an undoubted sign of the Messiah's being come. Parallel to this are those two prophecies, the one in Haggai, and the other in Malachi.

(3.) The prophet Haggai, chap. ii. 6, 7, 9, brings in God himself, thus saying, 'Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory; yea, the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.' That this is a prediction of the Messiah, will appear among others, by this one irrefragable argument. The latter house, which is here spoken of, was far short of the former; and in particular there were five things wanting in it: the Urim and Thummim, the ark of the covenant, the Shekinah, the fire from heaven, and the spirit of prophecy. Now there cannot anything be rationally affirmed, as that which, notwithstanding those defects, should render this latter house more glorious than the former, but only the Messiah's presence.

(4.) Finally, the prophet Malachi, chap. iii. 1, in the name of God, saith, 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, he shall come.' Where those words, *the Lord, whom ye seek*, are no other than a periphrasis of *the Messiah*, whom the Jews expected, whom this last of the prophets foretells, not only to come, but to come suddenly, and that with a double *behold*, to intimate both the certainty and propinquity of his coming. By both these predictions it is clearly manifest, that the time of the Messiah's coming was to be whilst this latter temple was standing, and therefore the destruction of the temple is an undeniable note of the Messiah's being come.

By what hath been said from these prophecies, one would think the Jew might be convinced of his folly in still looking for a Messiah, whenas it is so many hundred years since the Jewish government, together with the city and temple of Jerusalem, was destroyed. And that the Jesus whom we profess to be the Christ, was born before this utter dissipation, is an history so



clear, that I suppose none will question it. Indeed, many learned Christians have taken great pains, and to good purpose, exactly paralleling the time of the coming of Jesus with the prophecies of Christ, and especially with that which is the most punctual prophecy; to wit, Daniel's; referring the going forth of the commandment, not to that which was given by Cyrus, but by Artaxerxes Longimanus, in the twentieth year of his reign. Yea, some among the Jews (as Rabbi Nehemiah, who lived fifty years before Jesus) did affirm, that the Messiah should come at that time when Jesus was born. Nay, Porphyry, that bitter enemy of Christians, saw the history of Jesus so clearly corresponding to the prophecy in Daniel, that his last refuge is, to deny these prophecies to be Daniel's. But not troubling myself or you with chronological computations, it is enough for our present purpose, if it be granted (which I see not how it can be denied) that Jesus was born whilst yet the temple and city of Jerusalem was standing, and about the time of the utter departure of the civil government from Judah. Besides the sacred history of the Gospel, the testimony of Josephus the Jew, and the letter sent by Pilate, a Roman, to Tiberius (to which both Tertullian\* and Justin Martyr appeal) do sufficiently evince that there was such a person at that time born and living in Judea, and at last crucified by the Jews.

2. As to the *place* where the Messiah was to be born, the prophet Micah is express, chap. v. 2, where he saith, 'But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;' from which scripture it is that the Pharisees gave their answer upon Herod's inquiry concerning the place of his birth; in which respect the prophet and evangelist are fitly reconciled, while one calleth it *the least*, and the other saith it is *not the least*, to wit, because of the greatness of the person born in it. Now that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, we have no meaner testimony than that of an angel, in his message to the shepherds: Luke ii. 11, 'To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' Nor would it be passed by, the strangeness of that providence which brought it about that he should be born there; for whereas Joseph and Mary dwelt in Nazareth (twenty miles distant from Bethlehem, and it was far besides their thoughts to go to Bethlehem), it so falleth out that in a peaceable time the present emperor imposeth an universal tax upon the Jews among others, by which means every one is to go up to the city of their tribe, and so those of the house of David to Bethlehem, the city of David; and this fell out to be the very time when 'the days of Mary were accomplished that she should be de-

livered;' and this was done that the prophecy should be fulfilled.

3. The *tribe* of which the Messiah should come was that of Judah, and more particularly the house of David. This is intimated by Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10, when he foretelleth the coming of the Messiah under the name of *Shiloh*, which some interpret his son, to wit, Judah; and inasmuch as this prediction is inserted in the benediction of Judah, which can be for no other reason but that the Messiah was to come of him. More plain and particular is that prophecy of Isaiah, chap. ii. 1, 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his root;' where the Chaldee paraphrase expressly testifieth by that rod to be designed the Messiah, who should spring forth of David, who was a stem of Jesse. Yet more punctually doth this appear in that promise made to David, Ps. cxxxii. 11, by God, 'Of the fruit of thy loins will I set upon this throne;' and again, 2 Sam. vii. 12, 'I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom for ever;' the former of which is expressly applied to the Messiah by St Peter, Acts ii. 30. In reference to this it is that we read of the 'sure mercies of David,' Isa. lv. 3; yea, by Jeremiah and Hosea, this name of David is applied to the Messiah: Jer. xxx. 9, 'They shall serve, or seek, the Lord their God, and David their king,' Hos. iii. 5, which cannot be meant literally of David, who fell asleep long before, and therefore is mystically expounded of the Messiah, who is called David, because he was to come from his family. This truth was so known among the Jews, that when Jesus asked the Pharisees, Mat. xxii. 42, 'What think you of Christ? whose Son is he? they say to him, the Son of David.'

Now 'that our Lord sprang out of the tribe of Judah,' is affirmed by the author to the Hebrews to be 'evident,' Heb. i. 14; and he is said by St Paul expressly, 2 Tim. ii. 3, to be 'of the seed of David.' Remarkable to this purpose are his own words, where he saith, Rev. xxii. 16, 'I am the root and the offspring of David,' to wit, according to his two natures; in respect of his Godhead the *root*, and his manhood the *offspring* of David, by which that riddle is unfolded, of his being both the Lord and the Son of David. As for his legal father, Joseph, it is plain by St Matthew that he was of Judah's tribe; and Jesus being born of Mary after her espousals to Joseph, is upon that account to be reckoned of the tribe of Judah. For if when the brother did raise the seed to his brother by marrying his widow, the firstborn was to succeed in the name of the dead brother, and consequently reckoned as his son, Deut. xxv. 8, well might Mary's son, whom she miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost overshadowing, be reputed Joseph's, to whom she was espoused; and it being the custom of the Jews to derive the genealogy from the fathers, in which respect it was a proverb

\* Tertul. Apolog. cap. xxi.

among them, the mother's family is no family, Jesus is justly asserted to be of his father's tribe, though he was not his natural but only his legal father, though withal there is nothing rationally to contradict, that Mary was of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah. It is true Elizabeth, who was of the house of Aaron, Luke i. 26, the tribe of Levi, is called her cousin, but inasmuch as it was lawful for the tribe of Levi, having no possessions of their own, to marry into any tribe, it may be probably conceived that either some of the virgin Mary's ancestors married a wife of Levi's tribe, or some of Elizabeth's ancestors did marry a wife of Judah's tribe; and so either way there might be an affinity between the virgin Mary and Elizabeth. Besides this, that there is no convincing reason against it, there are good arguments inferring it; for since upon that particular occasion of Zelophehad's daughters, Num. xxxvi., there was a law enacted of every daughter marrying in her own tribe which had an inheritance, and if (as Casaubon argueth\*) the blessed virgin were, though in a mean condition, yet heir to an estate, it is very probable that she was of Joseph's own tribe, since he hath the testimony of a just man, and therefore one who would not violate so manifest a law. Add to this, that those words in St Luke, chap. i. 27, 'of the house of David,' may as well be referred to the virgin espoused to Joseph as to Joseph, and then it becometh a positive assertion that Mary was of the house of David. And yet once more, if (as Spanhemius strongly urgeth†) St Luke's genealogy giveth us the lineage of Mary, it is without all doubt that both by father and mother's side Jesus was of the tribe of Judah.

4. The predictions concerning the Messiah assert that he should be born of a *virgin*. The prophet Isaiah is express, chap. vii. 14, 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son;' and though the Hebrew word may signify any young woman, yet that there it should be rendered *virgin* even this consideration will evince, because it is ushered in with a *behold* of admiration, and it is intended as a sign for confirmation of Ahaz, whereas it were no wonder, and therefore not fit to be a sign, that a young woman should conceive and bear a son. Being, then, a prophecy of a son to be brought forth by a virgin, it is no other, doubtless, than the Messiah whose birth is there intended; and the very name *Immanuel* by which he is to be called, intimateth as much, it being a name too high for any person except the Messiah. What in this prophecy Isaiah spake plainly, in the fifty-third chapter he utters allusively, where, speaking of the Messiah (for that that chapter is to be understood of him is so evident that he who runs may read it), he saith, 'He shall grow up as a tender plant in a dry ground,' that is (say some not improbably), of a virgin without the help of man. Now, that Jesus was born of Mary whilst yet a virgin the evangelical

\* Casaub. exercit.

† Spanheim. dub. Evang.

history plainly affirmeth; nor need it seem impossible either to Jew or pagan.

As for the Jew, why may he not believe that the same divine power which caused old Sarah to conceive and bring forth when she was 'as good as dead,' which made Aaron's rod to bud, blossom, and bring forth almonds, yea, which formed the first man Adam without the help of woman, could enable a virgin to conceive and bring forth without the help of man?

As for the pagans, they affirm that Venus was engendered of the froth of the sea, animated by the warmth of the sun; that Pallas came from Jove's brain, and Bacchus from his thigh; that some of their heroes were begotten by their gods upon mortal creatures—Hercules on Alcmena, by Jupiter; Pan on Penelope, by Mercury; Romulus on Rhea, a virgin, by Mars. And why is it not credible that Jesus should be born of the virgin Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost? And thus I have given you a brief account of the parallel between the prophecy of Messiah and the history of Jesus, as to his birth.

2. The prophet Isaiah, speaking concerning the Messiah, tells us, Isa. xi. 2, that 'the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, and the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.' That this Spirit did rest on Jesus appeareth, both by the oracles he spake, and the works, especially by the miracles, he wrought. It was the testimony the people gave of him, that 'never man spake like him,' John vii. 46, by which it appeareth that the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge did rest on him. Never did any so clearly reveal the will of God to the people as he. The glorious promises were never so unveiled as by him, and by him the precepts of the law were most exactly interpreted. That the Spirit of might did rest on him eminently, appeared in his wondrous miracles, which were not done in a corner, but openly before the people, who cried out, 'We never saw it on this fashion,' Mark iii. 12. That miraculous works were expected by the Jews from the Messiah when he should come, appeareth by the question, John vii. 31, 'When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than those which this man hath done?' And accordingly when John sent to Jesus, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' he returneth this answer, Mat. xi. 3-5, 'Go and shew John again those things which you do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up;' all which could not have been done by him if he had not been anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power.

3. Concerning the Messiah, we find a threefold office to which he was anointed, to wit, of king, priest, and prophet. Moses foretells him to be a prophet, where he saith, Deut. xviii. 15, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren.'



David mentioneth him under the offices of a king, Ps. ii. 6, and a priest, Ps. cx. 4, 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion,' and 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.' This was that which was peculiar to the Messiah; for though David was a king and a prophet, Samuel was a prophet and a priest, and Melchisedec was a king and a priest, yet only the Messiah was a king, priest, and prophet. Accordingly it is that we find Jesus, as a prophet, teaching the mysteries of the kingdom; as a priest, praying, yea, dying for the people; and acknowledged by the Magi to be king of the Jews.

Once more, it is foretold in the Psalms and the prophets, concerning the Messiah, that he should be a man of sorrows, despised, and rejected of men; yea, that he should be cut off from the land of the living, that he should be taken from prison and judgment, Isa. liii. 9, 10; that having drunk of the brook in the way he should lift up his head, Ps. cx.; that he should not see corruption, Ps. xvi, and sit at the right hand of God. And now that all those things which were written concerning the Son of man were accomplished, the evangelical histories do abundantly testify.\* It were easy to trace out an exact parallel, not only as to substance but circumstances, concerning the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. As for that pretence of the Jews opposing our Saviour's resurrection, that his disciples stole him away, it is so frivolous and absurd that no rational man can believe it; yea, that dilemma of St Austin abundantly confuteth it: If the soldiers were not asleep when the disciples stole his body, why did they permit them to do it? If they were asleep, how could they affirm it to be done?

By all these considerations put together, it cannot but appear an undeniable truth that Jesus is the Christ; and however it may be alleged, that some prophecies which concern the glory and power of the Messiah's kingdom seem not yet to be accomplished, the answer is justly returned, that it is not an outward and visible, but an invisible and spiritual glory and power which is in those prophecies intended, and that is continually fulfilled in the preaching of the gospel; and withal they may very rationally be extended to his second coming, when he shall appear in glory to judge the world, and when 'every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess' (what now perhaps it denieth) 'that Jesus is the Lord,' the Christ, 'to the glory of God the Father.' And so I have given a dispatch to the truth implicitly asserted, pass we on more briefly to the,

2. Heresy explicitly charged on the false teachers, namely, 'denying that Jesus is the Christ.' If we render the words exactly, according to the Greek text, it is, he that denieth that Jesus is not the Christ; but yet the *not* is justly left out in our translation, because, according to our way of speaking, 'he that

\* Vide Episcop. p. 190.

denieth that Jesus is not the Christ,' is 'he who affirmeth Jesus is the Christ,' which is the truth; whereas in the Greek language, *gemina negatio fortius negat*, a double negation denieth more vehemently. Parallel to this is that speech of our Saviour to Peter, Luke xxii. 34, 'The cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me;' where in each clause the Greek useth two negatives for the greater emphasis. We cannot better express the force of the Greek phrase in our English language, than by supplying a word after denieth, namely, thus: 'who is a liar, but he that denieth, saying that Jesus is not the Christ?' And surely, if the affirmative be the truth, as hath been already proved, he must needs be a liar who asserteth the negative.

That this, then, is a lying heresy, appeareth by the preceding discourse; that which only remaineth to be inquired is the truth of the charge, that these false teachers did deny Jesus to be the Christ. Indeed, as Justinian well,\* *hoc maxime faciebant Julai*, this was that which the Jews did most expressly deny. But yet withal there were Judaising false teachers among the Christians: such was Simon Magus, Menander, Ebion, and Cerinthus, with others, upon whom this was justly charged. Simon Magus taught that it was he who appeared among the Jews as the Son, in Samaria as the Father, and to the rest of the nations as the Holy Ghost; Menander, that he was sent from the invisible powers as a saviour for the redemption of men; and so affirmed themselves to be the Christ, and in that denied Jesus to be the Christ. Valentinus, Ebion, and Cerinthus, affirmed Jesus to be a mere man, begotten by Joseph, conceived and born of Mary after the ordinary way, and that Christ was another person who descended on him in the shape of a dove when he was thirty years of age; and that it was not Christ, but Jesus, who died upon the cross, and was buried, and rose again;† and what did these but in effect deny Jesus to be the Christ? And now, if any shall say, This concerneth not us, for we do heartily acknowledge, and openly profess, that Jesus is the Christ; I shall desire such to consider that there is a direct and collateral, a dogmatical and a practical, denying Jesus to be the Christ.

1. He who, acknowledging Jesus to be the Christ, doth yet detract from any of his offices to which he was anointed, virtually and collaterally denieth him to be the Christ. Upon this account, both Socinians and papists are justly charged by the orthodox as antichristian liars.

The Socinians, indeed, acknowledge Christ's regal, prophetic, and sacerdotal offices, but yet they confound the regal and the sacerdotal; they detract from the regal, taking the rise of it from his resurrection,

\* Justin. in loc.

† Euseb. hist. lib. iii. cap. xxi. Iren. lib. i. cap. xx., xxi. Idem, lib. i. cap. xxv. et lib. iii. cap. xvii.

whenas the angel saith of him as soon as born, he is 'Christ the Lord;' and chiefly from his sacerdotal, whilst they acknowledge his intercession, but deny his sacrifice, and assert his death to be only a consecration of him to his priesthood, which, say they, he only exerciseth in heaven.

The papists likewise do ascribe those three offices to him, and yet they detract from every one of them: from his prophetic, by denying the written word to be a sufficient and perfect rule of faith and manners; from his sacerdotal, in both the parts of it, by their superstitious sacrifice of the mass, and praying to saints and angels to be their intercessors; finally, from the regal, by setting up the pope as head of the church, and giving him that power of supremacy and infallibility which he never derived from Christ.

2. But to bring it yet a little nearer to ourselves, he who professedly assents to this truth, that Jesus is the Christ, and yet is not guided by him as a prophet, governed by him as a king, and rests not on him as his priest, practically denieth him to be the Christ. Very apposite to this purpose is that of St Austin,\* *Quiescat paululum lingua, interroga vitam;*

\* Aug. in loc.

*quisquis factis negat Christum, antichristus est;* let thy life speak rather than thy tongue; whosoever denieth Christ in his works is an antichrist. 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any provide not for his house,' saith St Paul, 'he hath denied the faith,' that is, done an act inconsistent with the Christian faith whereof he maketh profession, which is in effect to deny the faith. Thus, he whose life dishonours Christ, who giveth not up himself to the rule and government of Christ, who sayeth in his actions, 'I will not have this man to reign over me,' in truth denieth Christ, and is no better than an antichrist; and oh, how many antichristian Christians, then, are there!

In one word, whatever profession we make of Christ, and our faith in him; whilst by our envy and malice, pride and covetousness, rapine and oppression, intemperance and profaneness, we walk directly contrary to the law and life, the command and example, of our holy, humble, peaceable, and charitable Jesus, we do that in our actions which the false teachers did in their doctrines, deny Jesus to be the Christ. And thus much shall suffice for the despatch of the first branch of the accusation; the time being expired, I shall put off the further prosecution of the charge against these antichrists till another sessions.

### SERMON LIII.

*Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*—1 JOHN II. 22, 23.

OUR blessed Saviour, calling those two sons of Zebedee, James and John, to be his disciples, gave them the surname of Boanerges, Mark iii. 17, which signifieth a 'son of thunder.' *Mutatio nominis doni alicujus spiritualis significacionem habet*, where names are changed, some spiritual gift is conferred.\* It was so, no doubt, upon those apostles to whom Christ gave eminent abilities of asserting truth, confuting errors, reproofing sin, persuading repentance, in such a way as might, like thunder, awaken the dull and drowsy world. That St James was such a thunderer, appeareth by his sufferings, it being very probable that his powerful preaching of the gospel was the occasion of Herod's malicious persecution, and that the liberty of his tongue cost him his life. That St John was one who did not only *lighten* in his conversation, but *thunder* in his doctrines, appeareth by his writings, and more particularly this epistle, wherein he crieth aloud, and lifteth up his voice like thunder, against both the hypocrites and heretics of his time; against those in the former chapter, these in this, and more especially in these verses, 'Who is a liar,' &c.

The latter branch of the accusation against the

\* Brig. *ibid.*

antichrists in St John's days, is that which now cometh to be discussed, as it is propounded in the end of the two-and-twentieth, and proved in the three-and-twentieth verse.

1. Begin we with the charge itself, 'He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.' These words are looked upon by expositors in a double notion, either as a distinct accusation, or as an aggravation of the former charge.

(1.) Serrarius upon this clause\* saith, *Altera heresis est negantium patrem et filium*. In these words another sort of heretics are charged, who denied the Father and the Son, inasmuch as they feigned another father; so did Basilides and Saturnius, as Epiphanius and Irenæus inform us.† Such, also, were those heretics, who confounded the Father and the Son, as if they were one and the same person, to whom Tertullian ‡ applieth this clause, where he saith, *Negant patrem dum eundem et filium dicunt, et negant filium dum eundem patrem eredunt, dando illis quæ non sunt, auferendo quæ sunt*; they deny the Father, in asserting him to be the Son; they deny the Son, in affirming

\* Serrar. in loc.

† Epiphani. adv. Har. s. lib. i. Iren. lib. iii. cap. xv.

‡ Tertul. adv. Grax. cap. xxxi.



him to be the Father; ascribing to both what they are not, and taking from them what they are. To this may be referred those fabulous things which were broached in those heretical schools of Simon and others, concerning God introducing a multitude of rulers, under the names of *Barbel, Abrakan, Karlahan*, &c., by whom the world was governed, which was indeed to deny the Father.

(2.) But that which seemeth to me most rational, is to look upon this clause as an aggravation of the former charge,\* letting us see what followeth upon denying Jesus to be the Christ, namely, a denial of the Father and the Son, and consequently how pernicious this antichristian doctrine is. For whereas *levius videri poterat*, it may seem a small thing to deny Jesus (who appeared in the form of a servant) to be the Christ, *addit quid gravius*, he addeth that which might justly startle them, that how little account soever they made of it, it was no other than to deny the Father and the Son, and so in effect the denying this man to be the Christ is to deny God himself. To open this distinctly in its full latitude, we shall find a threefold charge in this one.

1. He that denieth Jesus to be the Christ, denieth the Son of God. I begin with the Son, though the Father be the first person, because he is most directly denied. This will be the more easily understood, if we consider what our apostle taketh here for granted, that Christ is no other than the Son of God. How, and in what respect he is the Son of God, I shall have more full occasion to discuss at the ninth verse of the fourth chapter; it shall suffice here to take notice that the Messiah was looked upon as having the near relation to God of a Son. St Peter, in that excellent confession of his faith, Mat. xvi. 16, puts these two together, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Nay, the very devils who came out of them that were possessed, acknowledging him to be the Christ, do withal declare him to be the Son: Luke iv. 41, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of God;' and that this was a received opinion among the Jews appeareth by that question which the high priest put to him, Mark xiv. 61, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed?' Yea, as Grotius well observeth, *apparet hoc cognomen vulgo Messia datum*, it appeareth to have been a name of the Messiah, well known among the vulgar, by that of the very seamen, Mat. xiv. 33, who beholding the miracle wrought by him on the winds, cried out, 'Of a truth thou art the Son of God,' that is, the Messiah. Suitable to this it is that the ancient Hebrews did mystically interpret those words in the Psalms, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,' of the Messiah, by which it is evident that to deny him who is the Christ, is no other than to deny God's Son.

2. He doth not only deny the Son, but the Father; for,

\* *Eorum crimen amplificat.—Marlor.*

(1.) The relation between the Father and the Son is very near; no wonder if the injury done to the Son reflect upon the Father. If it is thus among men, much more in the Deity, where the Son is consubstantial and coeternal with the Father. Being the Son, he is 'the brightness of his Father's glory, and express image of his person.' So St Paul characteriseth him, Heb. i. 2, for which reason it is that 'all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father,' John v. 23. So our Saviour himself expressly asserteth, and thence inferreth, 'He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father.'

(2.) The Father it is who sends his Son into the world; and to deny him who is sent, what is it but to deny him who sendeth? To deny (saith Grotius\*) is sometimes as much as *authoritatem alieui detrachere*, to detract from one's authority, and to deny the person sent is in effect to deny the authority of the sender. In this respect it is that, in the scripture now quoted, those words are added, 'that sent him;' and to this purpose that of our Saviour elsewhere is very apposite: Luke x. 16, 'He that despiseth you despiseth me' (to wit, because they were sent by him): 'and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me,' to wit, the Father, by whom Christ was sent.

(3.) The Father having sent his Son, was pleased to give testimony to him. They are Christ's own words, John v. 37, 'The Father himself, which sent me, hath borne witness of me;' accordingly, if you look into St Matthew's Gospel, chap. iii. 17, you will find that, at his baptism, a voice was heard from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' and again, at his transfiguration on the mount, chap. xvii. 5, behold, a voice from the clouds, which said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him;' to which last St Peter alludeth where he saith of Christ, 2 Peter i. 17, 'He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came forth a voice to him from the excellent glory.' So that God having given this testimony (than which what can be more full or immediate) of the Messiah, that he was his Son, whosoever denieth the Christ the Son of God, giveth the Father the lie, according as our apostle more fully expresseth in the close of this epistle: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.'

3. Lastly, though it be not expressed, yet it would be supplied, he denieth not only the Father and the Son, but the Holy Ghost. For as in the first chapter, where our 'fellowship' is said to be 'with the Father and his Son,' the Holy Ghost is included; so here doubtless the third person is implied, who is no less denied than the other two by them who deny Jesus to be the Christ. The Greek word *χριστος* cometh from the verb which signifieth to *anoint*; now to this anointing all the three persons did concur: there is

\* Grot. in loc.

*persona ungens, uncta, and unctio*, the Father anointing, the Son anointed, and the Holy Ghost the ointment, and therefore he that denieth the Christ denieth all three persons. It was by no other than the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ did all his glorious miracles, his mighty works; in which respect the pharisees, denying Jesus to be the Christ, became guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; and thus this heresy is no less than a denial of the blessed Trinity.

To shut up this clause; learn we hence, when we receive any doctrine, to consider what consequences do naturally flow from them. I have so much charity as to think that many of the Jews, and some of the followers of those antichrists, did not think that by denying Jesus to be the Christ, they were guilty of such a blasphemy against the Deity as to deny the Father and the Son; but yet so it was, as appeareth by what hath been already said. I have the same opinion of many seduced persons in this age, who are not so considerate to weigh the evil inferences which are justly deducible from such premises which they embrace as truth.

Indeed, we must distinguish between natural and forced deductions. Some, like spiders, suck poison out of flowers; like bad stomachs, turn the best nutriment into ill humours, perverting the soundest doctrines by fallacious paralogisms. If we are made sinners by one man's disobedience, then, say some, God is unjust in charging Adam's posterity with his guilt. If justification be by faith alone, then, say others, what need of good works? If Christ be the propitiation for the sins of the world, then, say others, we need not fear though we add sin to sin; and thus the most precious doctrines of the gospel are abused to patronise horrid conclusions; but how irrational they are, easily appeareth to any who shall judiciously examine them. Nor doth this hinder but that many specious doctrines have a sting in their tail; and how amiable soever they seem in their direct aspects, yet they will be found very detestable in their reflection. The antinomian, in denying that God seeth any sin in justified persons, or is at all displeased with them when they sin, denieth that he is omniscient, not knowing all things, and that he is a pure and holy God, hating sin wherever he finds it. The Socinian, in denying that Christ did expiate sin, and satisfy justice, denieth the merit of his death, the dignity of his person, and justification by faith in his blood. Many instances of this kind might be brought in several erroneous positions, both of these and other hereties. The truth is, according to that known saying, *uno dato absurdo mille sequuntur*, one absurdity being granted, a thousand follow, and such as, were they apprehended, would doubtless be abhorred, though not by those who broach, yet by many of them who entertain such positions; and therefore let it be our wisdom to examine whither this or that doctrine tends, to what it leads, and what must necessarily follow upon it, for

so doth St John here; in which respect he chargeth them who deny that Jesus is the Christ, with denying the Father and the Son.

2. The proof of this latter part of the charge is that which now followeth in the next verse, 'Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.' I call this a proof, and not without reason; since the argument is strong, he that hath not the Father denieth him, he that denieth the Son hath not the Father, and therefore he denieth the Father and the Son.

The verse consists of two clauses, the latter whereof is not in our ordinary Greek copies, and therefore is left out by Calvin, and is conceived by Danaus to have crept out of the gloss into the text. But Beza assureth us that he saw it in two Greek manuscripts;\* it is also in the Syriac and vulgar Latin, and inserted (though in another character) by our translators. If we peruse the writings of this apostle, we shall find no way of illustration more frequent than that which is by contraries, whilst sometime the affirmative is amplified by the negative, and then again the negative by the affirmative; in which respect it is not improbable that this affirmative might here be annexed by the apostle. But since I shall have a more fit occasion of handling the duty of confessing Christ, when (by God's grace) I shall come to the second and thirteenth verses of the fourth chapter, and withal (there being the same reason of contraries) the unfolding of the one is virtually an explication of the other, I shall not enlarge in a distinct handling of these clauses.

That which would here be principally inquired into is the notion of this phrase, *τὸν πατέρα ἔχειν*, to have the Father, of which interpreters give a threefold construction.

1. That phrase in the first commandment, Exod. xx. 3, of having none but Jehovah to be our God, may give some light to this; for as there *habendi verbum pro credere, intelligere, usurpatur*, the word *having* is as much as *knowing* and *believing*, so here. And then the design of our apostle in these words is to let us know that all Jews and others who deny the Messiah, however they pretend to believe in, and give worship to, and have the knowledge of, the true God, in truth they are ignorant of him, and so neither believe nor worship him aright, because they do not know, believe, and worship him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, this is to be understood (as to the explicit notion) with a limitation in reference to Christ already come. As for the Jews before Christ (though the godly among them had some glimpse of this, for otherwise they could not have believed in the Messiah which was to come), yet it was not expressly required of them to invoke God as the Father of Christ; but God having now sent his Son into, and by him revealed himself unto, the world, he can no

\* Vide Calv., Dan., Beza in loc.



other ways be rightly adored and invocated but as his Father. To this purpose it is that Christ is called by the apostle 'the image of the invisible God,' Col. i. 15, which though it be true of him as he is the Son of God, in respect of his eternal generation, by which the divine essence being communicated to him, he is the image of God, that is (personally taken), God the Father, yet in that the apostle saith not only 'the image of God,' but of the *invisible* God, there seemeth to be a tacit antithesis, and so it is to be understood of the Son of God made man, who by his incarnation is become a visible image of the invisible God. For this reason it is he saith himself elsewhere, John xiv. 7, 'If ye knew me, you would know the Father also.' And indeed, as we cannot comfortably see the sun with a direct aspect, but in its reflection, so neither can we rightly know the Father but in Christ, who is his visible image. Suitable hereunto it is that our Saviour expressly saith, Mat. xi. 27, 'No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' And among other constructions of those words, John xiv. 1, 'You believe in God, believe also in me,' this is one,\* that if they did not believe in him, they could not believe in God. So that from hence we may infer that not only the barbarous pagans, who worship the sun, the fire, or any other creatures of God's making, or stones and images of their own making, but the Mahometans, and the Jews, who worship the great Creator, inasmuch as those only worship him as revealing himself (in their fanatic opinion) by Mahomet, and these worship him only as he was pleased to reveal himself of old by Moses, but not as now he hath manifested himself in his Son Jesus; nay, both of them denying his Son Jesus, are therefore most justly looked upon, not only as false worshippers of a true God, but in some sense as worshippers of a false god, because they have not, that is, they know not, neither do they believe and worship the Father of Christ, to wit, not formally, though materially, adoring him *who is*, but not *as he is*, the Father.

2. That phrase of St Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 16, *νοῦν χριστοῦ ἔχομεν*, 'we have the mind of Christ,' may serve as a paraphrase upon this. To *have the Father* is to *have the mind of the Father*, which is elsewhere called his good, acceptable, and perfect will. This will or good pleasure of the Father is the redemption of the world, which he sent his Son both to accomplish and reveal. In this respect St Basil upon these words,† 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' thus glosseth: *οὐ τὸν χαρακτῆρα οὐδὲ τὴν μορφήν ἀλλὰ τὸ αγαθὸν τοῦ θελήματος*; not the figure or form of the Father's essence, which is most simple and uncompounded, but the goodness of his will; and therefore he who denieth the Son cannot have, but is either altogether ignorant of, or apostatised from, the doctrine of the

\* Musc. *ibid.*

† Basil ad Amphiloch. cap. viii.

Father. Of which latter the apostle especially speaking, the notion of *ἔχειν* is taken as if it were *κατέχειν* (for so it is many times used), to *hold*. And accordingly Grotius glosseth, *Non tenet quæ sit voluntas patris*, he doth not hold fast the good will of the Father which is published in the evangelical doctrine. And no wonder, for he that hath not, holdeth not, the foundation, cannot have the superstructure. Now, this thesis, that Jesus is the Christ, is the very foundation of that gospel truth which the Father hath by Christ imparted to us; and consequently the denial of this cannot consist with having the Father, that is, with holding the will and mind of the Father declared in the gospel.

3. Lastly, that gloss of St Cyprian\* would by no means be left out, *Non habet patrem benevolam*, he hath not the Father benevolous and propitious to him; and so we may construe this phrase by that in the first chapter, of having fellowship with the Father. And whereas it is said in the former verse, he denieth the Father, this carrieth more in it, namely, that the Father denieth him. Indeed, all that love the Father hath to us, and fellowship we have with the Father, is through his Son. Whence it followeth, that every one who *hath not* the Son, but much more he who *denieth* the Son, hath not the Father; yea, the Father is highly displeased and enraged against him. When Theodosius would not be entreated by Amphilochius to suppress the Arian heretics, who denied Christ to be the eternal Son of God, that godly bishop (saith Theodoret †), *μνήμης ἀξίαν ἐξέυρε μηχανήν*, found out a memorable stratagem to convince him of his fault; for going into the palace when Theodosius and his son Arcadius were together, he saluteth the emperor with his wonted reverence, but giveth no honour to the son. The emperor, supposing it was a forgetful neglect, puts him in mind of it; to whom his answer was, it was enough that he had done obedience to him. At which the emperor, being greatly offended, the good bishop thus bespoke him: *ὄρας ὦ βασιλεῦ ὅπως οὐ φέρεis τὴν τοῦ παίδος ἀτιμίαν*, You see, O king, how ill you take it, that your son should be dishonoured; how angry you are with me for not giving him reverence! *πίστευσον δὴ ὄν και τὸν τῶν ὄλων Θεόν τοῖς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ βλασφημοῦντας βδελύττεσθαι*, Believe, therefore, that the great Lord of the universe cannot but abhor those who blaspheme his only begotten Son. Of this number were these antichrists, concerning whom St John plainly asserteth, that denying the Son, they have not the Father; no true knowledge of him, nor of his doctrine, nor can they expect his love and favour towards them.

What now remaineth, but that we take heed lest we be found among the number of them who deny the Son? Nor is this caution unseasonable, for,

1. There want not among us such (the Socinians,

\* Cyp. Exhort. ad Martyr.

† Theod. Eccle. Hist. lib. v. cap. 16.

I mean) who affirm, with those heretics of old, Christ to be only man; and these, however they pretend to acknowledge, yet consequentially deny him to be the Son of God; for, saith the author to the Hebrews, chap. i. 6, 'Unto which of the angels said he at any time, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?' and if not to the angels, surely not to a mere man, who is lower than the angels. It would not be passed by, that a little after, in that very epistle, Heb. ii. 6-9, Jesus, whom the apostle had proved to be far higher than the angels, and that in this very particular of being God's Son, is said to be 'little lower than the angels.' And that this is to be understood in respect of his manhood appeareth by the scripture just before quoted, 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him; thou hast made him a little lower than the angels;' the literal sense whereof is, to assert the human nature inferior to the angelical. Surely, then, in respect of that nature wherein he is below, he cannot be far above, the angels; and therefore to assert him a mere man (though never so highly honoured) is to deny him to be the Son of God in the apostle's sense; that is, so as by reason of that Sonship to be higher than the angels. For to allude to St Paul's expression, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, 'Though they are called gods, whether in heaven or earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but there is but one God the Father,' so, though there be that are called the sons of God, whether angels or men, yet there is but one who is the begotten Son of God, which is so high a dignity that he must be more than man or angel who is capable of it, and consequently to assert him a mere man is to deny him to be God's Son.

2. Besides, we may be orthodox in our judgment concerning the Son of God, and forward in our confession of him, and yet interpretatively deny him, and that especially two ways.

(1.) When we detract from the all-sufficiency of his merits. Upon what is it that the infinite virtue of our Saviour's death did chiefly depend but this, that he is the Son of God? So that he that doth not rely on the virtue of his death, denieth him to be God's Son; and yet how apt are many to offend in this kind, by either a total despairing of salvation through Christ, or a partial joining of other saviours with him; and to say that either Christ's blood cannot at all; or that it cannot alone (to wit, as a meritorious cause) expiate sin, is to say it is insufficient, and consequently it is not the blood of the Son of God, which may justly be interpreted a denial of the Son of God.

(2.) When we refuse to hear and obey the word of God, who 'at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, and hath in those last days spoken to us by his Son,' Heb. i. 1, 2. Of this Son the voice said twice, 'Hear him;' and not to hearken to him when he speaketh to us, is in effect to deny him. Who is it

but the Son that woeth us in the ministry of the gospel, to accept of mercy, pardon, and salvation, upon the terms of faith, repentance, and obedience; and if we say *No* in our hearts, is not this to deny him? 'How often' (saith Christ to Jerusalem, Mat. xxiii. 37) 'would I have gathered thy children together, as an hen doth her chickens under her wings, but you would not!' May he not take up the same complaint of us? 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh' (saith the author to the Hebrews, chap. xii. 24), 'for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven;' where the two words of *refusing* and *turning away* are very emphatical: the one signifying to pray against a thing, for so oftentimes we refuse with a *God forbid*, and so it noteth a refusal with indignation; the other importing an alienation of the heart from a thing, since we turn away from what we cannot endure, and so intimateth a rejection with detestation. And have not we need of this caution? Since though (being the Son of God) he came and spake from heaven, yet we reject his sayings; and is not this to deny him?

3. Add to this, that *Christum deserit qui Christianum se non asserit*, he that doth not profess himself a Christian denieth Christ. Not only those who wilfully, professedly, maliciously, and so at once both inwardly and outwardly deny the Christ, the Son of God; but those who, whilst inwardly they believe in him, do yet refuse (if called to it) openly to own him, either through fear or shame, or both, are virtually deniers of him. It is very observable that what is here called a 'denying of the Son,' is elsewhere phrased a 'not honouring the Son.' John v. 23; that whereas in St Matthew it is, 'Whosoever shall deny me,' Mat. x. 33, in St Mark it is, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me,' Mark viii. 38; that in St Paul's Epistle to Timothy, denying Christ is opposed to suffering for him, 2 Tim. ii. 12; finally, that here is no medium in the text between denying and acknowledging the Son. By all which it appeareth that though we do not wretchedly oppose and gainsay the Son of God, yet if we do not honour him, and that as we honour the Father, with the same adoration both of soul and body; if we are not ready upon all occasions to acknowledge him; if, because of reproach, we are ashamed to own him; nay, if we refuse (being called) to suffer, though it be death itself, for his name, we are no other than deniers of him.

And now, beloved, though at present there be neither disgrace nor danger in acknowledging the Messiah the Son of God; nay, indeed, *quastuosa res est nomen Christi*, it is both gainful and honourable to be a Christian, and therefore it is little thanks to own Christ; yet what think you if we had lived in the pagan persecution, or if God should (which his mercy avert) let loose the Turk to invade Christendom, or suffer the Socinian heresy to overspread the world, as



once the Arian did, have we ready hearts, willing minds to contend for the faith? Nay, rather, would we not wretchedly renounce, at least cowardly conceal, our Christian profession? Certainly, my brethren, they who now deny obedience to his call, will then deny the profession of his name; they that will not bear the Son speaking to them in his word, will never bear reproaches and persecutions for his sake. Upon all these considerations, it is an useful admonition to us that we do not deny but acknowledge the Son. It is the psalmist's advice even to kings, Ps. ii. 10, well may we follow it, 'Kiss the Son lest he be angry;' kiss him with a kiss of affection, of subjection; be ready to testify your faith in him, reverence of him, love to him, upon all occasions.

The more to enforce this upon us, take notice,

1. Who it is, the Son, and that in a double notion.

(1.) Being the Son, he 'thinketh it no robbery to be equal with God,' Philip. iii. 5, inasmuch as, according to the Athanasian creed, he is God of God, light of light, very God of very God. Being the Son, he is heir of all things, Lord of heaven and earth; and shall we in any kind, or for any cause, deny him? This is that which St Jude brings in as an aggravation of the sin of these very antichrists, whom he calls 'certain men crept in unawares, they denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,' Jude 4; where, though some take the words disjunctively, applying the first clause to the Father, and the second to the Son, yet since there is no article in the Greek between *Θεόν* and *κύριον*, *God* and *Lord*, to divide them; yea, the word *δεσποτης*, in that parallel place of St Peter, is evidently used of Christ, and withal the heresies of those times more directly struck at Christ than at God the Father; it is not improbable that St Jude intended here only to set forth Christ in his natures and prerogatives, whom he calls 'the only Lord God' (as elsewhere the Father is styled 'the only true God'), not in exclusion of the other persons, but of all false deities. And now, when we set before us the divinity, majesty, sovereignty, and authority of Christ, the only Lord God, how must the sin of denying him appear beyond measure sinful!

(2.) This glorious and eternal Son of God was pleased to undertake and accomplish the work of our redemption, and it would be no other than a monstrous ingratitude to deny him. Upon this account, St Peter, speaking of these very antichrists under the name of false teachers, 2 Pet. ii. 2, aggravateth their denial of Christ, in that it was of 'the Lord that bought them.' There cannot be a more execrable villany, than for a slave to disown his lord that hath ransomed him. Who would not cry shame on that son who should deny his own father? And may I not say of the Son of God, in Moses his language, to every one of us, Deut. xxxii. 6, 'Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee?' What is there thou canst be in danger of by acknowledging him, which he did not actually undergo

to redeem thee? Is it loss of estate? he was poor; of credit? he was reviled; of liberty? he was bound; of life? he was crucified; and shall any of these dishearten us from honouring, or induce us to deny him? When therefore any temptations shall assault us (as once they did Peter) to deny him, let us remember what he is in himself, and what he hath done for us; let us consider his greatness, and be afraid; his goodness, and be ashamed; for fear, or shame, or any cause whatsoever to deny him.

2. That I may drive the nail to the head, let us often set before our eyes that dismal commination so often denounced in the Gospel by the Son of God himself against those who shall deny him, Mat. x. 33, 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven;' and again inculcated by St Paul, 2 Tim. ii. 13, 'If we deny him, he will deny us:' a threat than which none more just, and yet withal, none more terrible. Just it is, in that it is the retaliation of like for like. What more rational than that despisers should be despised, forsakers should be forsaken, and deniers should be denied? And how terrible it is will soon appear, if you consider that the Son of God will then deny us, when he shall appear in his glory, that he will deny us not only before men, but angels, nay, his Father; that if he pronounce upon us an *I know you not* (which is to deny us), we are the cursed of the Father; he will not acknowledge them for his adopted children, who durst not here own his begotten Son, and whom his Son will not then own for brethren; yea, which consummateth the misery of such apostates, they must 'have their portion with hypocrites,' having denied Christ; and being denied by him, they must depart from him into that fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels, there being no reason that they should be near to Christ hereafter, who follow him afar off, nay, run away from him here.

With these meditations, let us arm ourselves against this heinous sin; and that we may be the better strengthened,

1. Labour we to be thoroughly established upon good grounds in this fundamental doctrine, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He that embraceth Christian religion upon the account only of the public law, or private education, will in time of trial renege it. Let, therefore, our assent to this doctrine rest upon these sure pillars, primarily the authority of Scriptures, and secondarily the catholic church, and then we shall not easily deny it. Nor let us content ourselves with a conjectural opinion, but strive for a firm and settled persuasion. A stake in the ground may be quickly plucked up, but a tree rooted in the ground abideth unmoveable. He that doubteth may soon be brought to deny, but a well grounded persuasion will not quickly be moved, much less removed.

2. Learn we, according to our Saviour's precept,

Mat. xvi. 24, to 'deny ourselves,' since oftentimes self and Christ come in competition, so that one must be denied; and if we have not in some measure taken out this excellent lesson of self-denial, we shall soon deny him. No wonder if an ancient saith ingenuously, *Christiani praludium, sui repudium*, the first step in the ladder of Christianity is self-denial.

3. Nor must we forget that advice of St Paul, Titus ii. 14, to 'deny worldly lusts,' for if we take not our hearts off from the world, the world will take them off from Christ. It is very observable that our Saviour had no sooner threatened this sin of denying him, but he presently forbids loving father or mother, son or daughter, more than him, Mat. x. 33, 37, intimating how prone the inordinate love of worldly things is, to alienate us from him.

4. Finally, strive for a real union to Christ by a lively faith. He who is but a visible Christian may cease to be so much as visible; but the spiritual union will not endure a dissolution, much less an abnegation. Maintain and increase familiar communion with him, that thou mayest more and more taste the sweetness that is in him, and then no allurements or affrightments shall cause thee to deny him.

I end all; as we desire not to be found deniers of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as we desire to have the Father propitious towards us, and Christ to own us before the Father at the last day, let us dread to deny, let us be ready to acknowledge, with our hearts, lips, lives, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

### SERMON LIV.

*Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised to us, even eternal life.—1 JOHN II. 24, 25.*

**Z**EAL, sincerity, and perseverance are not so much particular graces, as each of them necessary ingredients to every grace; zeal being the fervour, sincerity the truth, and perseverance the duration of all graces. Of these three, the last is not the least needful, since constancy is the best evidence of sincerity; nor will fervour avail without permanency. No wonder if it be called by Bonaventure, \* *eonditio annexa cuilibet virtuti*, an inseparable condition of every virtue, and by Aquinas, † *donum quo cetera serrantur dona*, that gift which preserveth all the rest. Without perseverance, our love will prove not a star, but a comet; our devotion not a flame, but a flash; our repentance not a river, but a pond; our hope not a staff, but a reed; and our faith not a substance, but a shadow. And since this grace of faith last mentioned is indeed the first, the root, the mother grace, constancy is not more needful in any than this. The truth is, there is no grace more oppugned by the devil than our faith; he well knoweth, that if he can undermine the foundation, he shall soon overthrow the building; for which reason, having obtained leave to sift St Peter, our Saviour prayeth for him, that his 'faith may not fail.' Upon this account it is, that more or less in all ages, the devil hath raised up false teachers in the church, whose endeavour it is to withdraw the people from the ancient catholic and apostolic faith; and for this cause no doubt it is, that one of the chief designs of the holy apostles in all their epistles, is to establish Christians in the faith. A pregnant instance whereof we have in this epistle, particularly in these verses, whose scope is, by most

obliging arguments, to persuade a stedfast adherence to the truth which they had embraced: 'Let that therefore which you have heard from the beginning,' &c.

Which words do plainly part themselves into two generals, a mandate and a motive, a command and a comfort, an exhortation and an incitation.

The exhortation enjoineth a needful duty: 'Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning.'

The incitation adjoineth a powerful motive, drawn from the present comfort and future bliss of persevering saints: 'If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise which he hath promised, eternal life.'

Begin we with the duty, which we shall find to be in order the seventh step of that lightsome walk, the delineating whereof I have once and again told you is the principal design of this epistle.

The first word we meet with in the Greek, ὑμεῖς, seemeth here to be superfluous, as also in the beginning of the seven-and-twentieth verse; but whether we look upon it as transposed, or put absolutely, it will bear a good construction. By way of transposition, ὑμεῖς οὖν ὁ is as much as ὁ οὖν ὑμεῖς. Thus our translators here read it: 'Let that, therefore, which you have heard,' and also in the other verse, 'The anointing which you have received.' Absolutely taken, both here and there, it is an ellipsis, and the sense is as much as, *as for you therefore*; as if he should have said, However others fall away, yet let that which you have heard abide in you. These antichrists (with their followers) forsake, but do you continue in the

\* Bonavent. in sent. 3 dist. 24.

† Aquin. 1a. 2a. quæst. 26, ar. 2.



apostolical doctrine; nay, therefore, because they are fallen, do you stand the more firmly. In this sense, the apostle's counsel is much like Joshua's resolution: Josh. xxiv. 15, 'But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' Indeed, it is the glory of a Christian, like fish, to keep fresh in salt waters; to profess Christ's name where Satan's throne is, Rev. ii. 13, and, like stars in a dark night, to shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. The truth is, to be antichristian among antichrists is usual, to be a Christian among Christians is laudable, to be antichristian among Christians is abominable, but to be a Christian among antichrists is admirable; no such trial of constancy as in times of apostasy. Virtue is never more amiable in God's eyes than when she is out of fashion in the world. It is said of Noah, Gen. vi. 7, that he 'found grace in the eyes of the Lord;' and the next verse tells the reason, 'He was perfect and upright in his generation.' Grace, though only in the heart, finds grace in God's eyes, but especially in the life, and more especially when (like Noah) it is in a degenerating generation. Had Peter done as he said (Mat. xxvi. 33, 'Though all men should be offended, yet will not I'), he might well have challenged the privilege of being Christ's beloved disciple. Oh let us fix in our minds this holy purpose of cleaving to Christ and his truth, though others leave it; yea, let their defection by a kind of antiperistasis corroborate our resolution of continuing in the doctrine we have received.

More particularly in the exhortation, we shall take notice of the object which it concerneth, and the duty which it requireth. The object proposed is, that which they had heard from the beginning; the duty required is, that it abide in them.

1. The matter spoken of is, 'that which they had heard from the beginning.' By *beginning* in this place is to be understood, the beginning of the preaching of the gospel to them; *ex quo institui cepistis*, so Beza glosseth,\* since you began to be instructed in Christianity; for it is not said, let that abide in you which was from the beginning; then the date might have been taken from the beginning of the world, since so soon as Adam fell, the gospel was preached, but that which *you have heard* from the beginning; and though at the seventh verse the phrase of an old commandment gave just occasion to refer that *from the beginning* to a further distance, and so of interpreting there *you by your ancestors*, yet here, there being no such reason inducing, we are not to recede from the most plain meaning of the letter, especially when we consider that the exhortation, 'Let that abide in you,' most rationally refers to what they themselves had heard; and therefore in this place, those words *from the beginning*, refer to the time of their first reception of the faith.

If you ask what it was that they heard from the be-

\* Beza. in loc.

ginning, the answer is returned, either particularly, *Primum dogma de Christi divinitate*, so Justinian,\* the fundamental verity of Christ's divinity; or generally, the whole evangelical doctrine of salvation by Christ, which had been preached to them by the apostles.

If you ask why it is thus phrased, not let that which the gospel revealeth, but that 'which you have heard from the beginning;' I answer upon a double account. To let us see,

1. What is the true doctrine, namely, that which was delivered from the beginning, for though it is possible for falsehood to be ancient, yet truth is always first. The envious man may sow his tares in the field where the good seed was sown, and possibly the tares may grow so fast as to hide the wheat, but still the good seed was first sown. Prime antiquity is a sure note of verity. The primitive times and truths were of all other the purest, like the clear water at the spring-head. But of this I have spoken heretofore.

2. By what means they received the evangelical doctrine, namely, by hearing.

Among those several senses with which God hath invested man, I know not any more needful than that of hearing, in what capacity soever you consider him, especially as he is ζῶον λογικόν, πολιτικόν, θεῖον, by nature a reasonable, by converse a sociable, and may be by grace a new, a divine creature.

(1.) Reason is the perfection of man, and hearing is the improvement of reason. *Auris*, say some, *quasi hauris*, *ab hauriendo*, the ear being the sense by which we suck in knowledge; in which respect the son of Syrach saith, † 'God hath given man ears, and an heart to understand.' Knowledge is as the liquor, the soul the vessel, and as the tongue is the tap to let it out, so the ear is the tunnel to let it in. Whence it is that learners are called *auditores*, hearers. Upon this account perhaps it is, that whereas other parts have their shuts, sometimes to close them up, the eyes lids like curtains, to draw over those crystalline windows, and the tongue encompassed with an ivory wall of teeth, only the nostrils and the ears be always open: those for breathing, these for hearing, that man, which is ever learning, might be ever hearing.

(2.) Society is the delight of man, and hearing is the sense of society. *Auribus alienos sermones admittimus et mente recondimus*, saith a rabbin; ‡ by hearing we have converse each with another, we enjoy the comfort one of another's advice, discourse, conference. A deaf man is as a dead man to others, and liveth only to himself, as being unfit either for company, or traffic, or magistracy; and therefore the ancients, though they painted their judges without eyes, because they should not respect persons, and without hands, because they should take no bribes, yet not without ears, nay, with both ears, because they were to hear

\* Justin. *ibid.*

† Eclus. xvii. 5.

‡ L. Gersh.

both parties ; so needful is the sense for all civil transactions.

(3.) But, lastly, hearing is not only *sensus discipline et societatis*, but *fidci et religionis*, the sense of discipline and converse, but of faith and religion ; in which respect St Paul is express, Rom. x. 17, 'Faith cometh by hearing.' *Aurium sensus ideo datus est*, saith Lactantius,\* *ut doctrinam Dei percipere possimus*, for this cause chiefly is our hearing given us, that we may receive divine truths. Suitable to which is that of Tertullian,† *Vera ornamenta aurium Dei voces*, God's words are the best jewels we can hang at our ears. Indeed, such is our present state that we receive the greatest spiritual advantages by hearing ; *oculus organum patrie, auditus vie*, when we come to our country we shall use our eyes, but whilst we are in the way our chiefest use is of the ear. 'Faith,' saith the apostle, 'is the evidence of things not seen,' and we are most properly said to believe what we do not see ; but still we believe what we hear, and by hearing we come to believe. At St Paul's conversion there was a light seen, and a voice heard, Acts ix. 4 ; the light astonished, but the voice converted him. And in this respect we may call the ear the inroad and thoroughfare of grace, the soul's custom-house for her spiritual traffic in divine wisdom, the matrix or womb of our new birth, the pail into which is put the milk of the word, the still or limbeck of the dew of heaven, the window to let in the light of the gospel, the channel of the water of life, the pipe for the conveyance of faith ; in a word, the orifice or mouth of the soul, by which it receiveth spiritual food ; for by this means it was these Christians did partake of the gospel : 'That which you have heard.'

But yet this is not all that is intended in this phrase ; for inasmuch as by hearing we are brought to believing, therefore hearing is used to connote believing. Thus Timothy heard 'the form of sound words' from the apostle Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12, that is, so as to embrace it, and therefore he exhorts him to hold it fast. In this sense no doubt it is here to be understood, for in that our apostle would have it to abide, it intimateth they had heard so as to receive it, so that we are here implicitly taught we must so hear with our ears as to believe with our hearts evangelical doctrines. This is the character which our Saviour giveth of the good ground, that it 'heareth the word with a good and honest heart,' Luke viii. 5, which is, when the heart doth firmly assent and consent to that which is heard. It is the counsel of Solomon, Eccles. v. 1, 'Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be ready to hear.' The latter words in the Hebrew are, and *near to hear*, which, being joined with the former clause, seem to intimate that the foot should be near to hear ; and indeed he only heareth aright who heareth with his foot and his heart, as well as his ear : he heareth with his foot who

so heareth as to obey ; and he heareth with his heart who so heareth as to believe. I shut up this with that usual close of the epistles to the churches of Asia, 'He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.' Though all men have ears, yet all have not ears to hear. There are too many idol-hearers, of whom it may be said, as the psalmist saith of idols, Ps. cxv. 6, 'Ears have they, but they hear not.' *Audientes videlicet corporis sensu, non audiunt cordis assensu*, as St Austin elegantly,\* hearing with the sense of the body, they hear not with the assent of the mind. Oh let us be of God that which Solomon telleth us, Prov. xx. 12, is only in his power to give, the hearing ear. Indeed, whether we understand it in a corporal or a spiritual notion, it is God's gift ; he rightly disposeth the organ, and it is he who fitly qualificeth the mind, the former whereof maketh it an hearing ear in a natural, and the latter an hearing ear in a supernatural, sense. Our ears, in reference to the word of God and Christ, are stopped, Zech. vii. 11, not with wax or wool, or frankincense, but earth. Let us beseech God to open them, Isa. l. 5, they are dull and heavy ; let us pray him to awaken them, that we may be diligent and attentive hearers ; and having, by the door of our hearing, admitted the gospel into the closet of our souls, that which will be most needful to press upon us, is the,

2. Duty here required. 'Let that which you have heard abide in you.' A duty which may be capable of a double notion, either as enjoining a careful remembrance of, or a resolute adherence to, that which they had heard from the beginning.

(1.) Let that which you have heard abide in you by a faithful recollection. To this St Jude exhorts, 'But, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Jude 17. Our memories must be storehouses, and treasuries of precious truths and holy instructions, and, like books in a library, must be chained to them. With this agreeth that advice of our Saviour to the angel of the church of Sardis : Rev. iii. 3, 'Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast.' By hearing we receive, and by remembering we retain and hold fast, evangelical doctrines.

Nor is this exhortation needless, when we consider the hadness of our memories in divine matters. 'We ought to give' (saith the author to the Hebrews, chap. ii. 1) 'the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip,' tacitly resembling our crazy memories to leaking vessels, out of which the water of life soon slips, if they be not stopped. Perhaps, like sieves, whilst they are in the water they are full, but no sooner are they taken forth but all runs out presently. We can remember somewhat whilst we are hearing, but soon after we are gone out of God's house, what we heard is gone out of our minds. In this sense, therefore, it is needful counsel, 'Let that abide,' &c.

\* Lactant. lib. vi cap. xxi. † Tertul. Scorp. cap. iii.

\* Aug. de bono persever. lib. ii. cap. xiv.



(2.) But that which I conceive is the duty here persuaded, is, 'Let that abide in you which you have heard from the beginning,' by a constant adhesion to the end. *Ad fidei constantiam hortatur*, is Calvin's gloss,\* it is an exhortation to constancy in the faith. We may very well expound it by that of St Paul to the Colossians, chap. i. 2, 3,† 'If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard;' where the two words *grounded* and *settled* are metaphors, borrowed, the one from building, the other from a chair; so that as buildings, which are upon rocky and firm foundations, are not quickly thrown down, or as men that are fixed in their chair are not easily moved out of their place, no more must we Christians be withdrawn from our assent to, and love of, those truths we have heard. This is that which is expressed by those phrases of 'standing fast in the faith,' 1 Cor. xvi. 11, like a soldier which keepeth his ground; of 'keeping the faith,' 2 Tim. iv. 7, as a commander keepeth a castle; and of 'holding fast,' by which three Greek words are translated, and all of them very emphatical. 'Hold fast that which thou hast,' saith Christ to the angel of the church of Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 11; where the Greek verb is *κατέω*, from *κράτος*, that signifieth *strength*, and intimateth holding fast with a strong hand, by force or might, as we do one that would get away from us. 'Hold fast that which is good,' is St Paul's advice to the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. v. 21; where the word is *κατέχω*, which noteth a firm holding with both hands, and is used of them that are violently held in prison. 'Holding fast the faithful word,' is St Paul's word to Titus, chap. i. 9, where the Greek verb is, *ἀντέχομαι*, by which the Seventy render the Hebrew verb *קָיָה*, and which, according to its derivation, signifieth to hold fast against opposers. Thus must we, by divine strength, so hold that which we have heard, as resolving not to let it go, whatever befall us.

Nor is it without cause that our apostle adviseth to this stedfast retaining of the evangelical doctrine, if we consider what danger they were, and more or less Christians in all ages are, [in], of being deprived of it. That which we have in possession may be taken from us three ways, *raptō*, *furto*, *dolo*, by manifest theft, by subtle fraud, and by violent force. By all these means do our spiritual enemies endeavour to bereave us of that which we have heard.

(1.) Very often the lusts of the flesh, and the delights of the world, steal away that which we have heard out of our hearts, as the fowls of the air plucked up the seed which fell by the highway-side, Mark xiii. 4. Oh how many are so bewitched with carnal pleasures, that they let go spiritual truths! like the dog, who lost the flesh in his mouth, by catching at the shadow of it in the water.

(2.) Not seldom false teachers, by their fair pre-

\* Calv. in loc.

† Vide Daven. ib.

tences of divine revelations, sublime notions, gospel-light, endeavour to cheat us of that we have heard from the beginning. St Paul's phrase is very apposite to this purpose, Eph. iv. 14,\* where he speaketh of *κυβεία τῶν ἀνορθώπων*, 'the sleight of men,' tacitly comparing them to false gamesters, who have devices by cogging a die, to deceive the unskilful. Nothing more usual than for heretics, by subtle insinuations, to beguile the unlearned and unstable of those precious truths which they had before received.

(3.) Sometimes the devil stirreth up wicked persecutors, who set upon us with open violence, to make us let go our hold of the gospel; and as Lactantius well, *Hæc vera est constantia, ut nullus terror à Deo possit avertere*, then doth that we have heard abide in us, when no terrors can divert us from it. That is a truly heroic spirit which will not be dared out of his religion, which determineth to let go estate, liberty, nay, life itself, rather than that which it hath heard and embraced. It was a brave resolve of the Spartan, ἢ τῆν ἢ ἐπι τῆς, either to bring back his buckler, or to be brought back upon it. Such should be a Christian's resolution in point of religion, either to defend it, or die for it. We know not what storms and tempests may arise; needful it is we should be unmoved, like the rocks, in the midst of opposition.

But oh what cause is there of bemoaning the unsettledness of many in matters of religion! Pliny reports of a swimming island, which never appeareth in the same place one whole day together; and Carystius, of a flower that changeth colours three times in one day. How fit emblems are these of the professors of this age, who are ever and anon changing their religion, like the ship without an anchor, that is tossed to and fro in the sea, or like the chaff that is carried up and down with every blast! Let any one start up and broach some new doctrine under the mask of a glorious truth, and how do the giddy multitude run after him, forsaking those orthodox doctrines in which they were heretofore instructed! 'What went you out for to see? a reed shaken with the wind?' Too many such reeds may be seen everywhere in these apostatising days; men as of barren lives, so of fickle minds, unprofitable in their conversations, and unstable in their judgments. And especially if anything of self-interest, as to profit, or honour, or pleasure, come in competition, oh how easily are they removed from their former profession! No wonder if, when danger approacheth, and looketh them in the face, their trembling hands let go their hold, and they forego the truth. In few words, some are so foolish as to be cheated; more are so careless as to be robbed; the most are so cowardly as to be frighted, out of the truth which they have heard and professed.

Receive, then, a word of admonition, to retain and maintain the ancient catholic and apostolic faith.

Indeed, it is that which, by way of analogy, may be

\* Vide Erasm. ibid.

pressed upon the ministers of the gospel, Let that abide in them which they have taught from the beginning. In the law, the shoulder of the beast that was sacrificed was the priest's, and that is, *ἰσχυρός σημείων*, an emblem of strength. The first priest's name, *Aaron*, signifieth a *mountain of strength*; and the altar was called *Ariel*, *the lion of the Lord*, by all which is intimated how valiant they should be for the truth who serve at the altar, and are the priests of the most high God. It is set down by the apostle as one of the characters of a bishop, Titus i. 9, 'holding fast the faithful word.' For this the angel of the church of Philadelphia is highly commended and comforted: Rev. iii. 10, 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience;' and it is the apostle's charge to Timothy, 1 Tim. vi. 20, 'That good thing which is committed to thee, keep.' Indeed, the evangelical doctrine is a sacred depositum, which Christ hath left with the bishops and pastors of the church: 'To us' (saith the apostle) 'is committed the word of reconciliation.' Oh, let us not be so unfaithful as to betray our trust.

But yet it is not only the ministers, but all Christians, who are concerned in this duty; as that must abide with the preachers which they have taught, 2 Cor. v. 19, so that must abide with the people which they have heard from the beginning. This was that which St Paul and Barnabas persuaded the Jews and religious professors which followed them, namely, to 'continue in the grace of God,' Acts xiii. 43. For this end they returned to Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch, chap. xiv. 22, 'to confirm the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith.' It is sage counsel of the wise man, Prov. xxiii. 23, 'Buy the truth, but sell it not;' buy it at any rate, but sell it at none. Truth, as it is the minister's trust, so it is the inheritance of all Christians. Say we, therefore, with Naboth, 'God forbid I should sell the inheritance of my father.' Beloved, now is the time of trial, whether we will die like soldiers, or run away like cowards; whether we will quit ourselves like men, or be tossed to and fro like children. God, angels, men, are spectators to see how we will acquit ourselves, and whether we will adhere to the truth we have embraced. And truly, when we consider how tenacious hereties are of their novel errors, it may put blushing into our faces, who are so apt to be withdrawn from primitive truths; besides, what will it avail us to have heard, and that so as to believe, if that which we have heard do not abide? 'If you continue in my word' (saith our blessed Saviour, John viii. 31), 'then are you my disciples indeed.' As virtue, so truth, saith to us, Either never choose me, or never leave me, *Fides non accepta sed custodita vivificat*,\* it is not the receiving, but the keeping of the faith, which entitleth to life. Indeed, as the pilot keeping the ship is kept by the ship, so by the gospel's

\* Cypr. lib i. Ep. 6.

abiding in us, it is that we are preserved to life eternal. In one word, that which you have heard is the 'faith which was once delivered to the saints,' Jude 4; once for all, unalterably, unchangeably; as it hath been delivered to, let it be preserved by you. We cannot always remain with you; but oh, let that which you have heard from us remain with you, and as you have heard it from the beginning, so let it abide with you to the end.

That this counsel may be the better followed, observe these short directions.

1. Strive for a well-grounded knowledge. He that embraceth the truth he knoweth not why, will leave it he knoweth not how. The ship that is not well ballasted may soon be overturned; silly women are easily captivated by crafty teachers. Let that which hath been heard by you be assented to upon good grounds, and then it will abide with you.

2. Keep the mind lowly. Ignorance is a sponge to suck in, and pride is a bawd to vent, error. None more likely to fall than he that proudly leans to his own understanding; nor are any hearers more foolishly fickle than they that think themselves wiser than their teachers.

3. Love the truth affectionately. 'Hold fast' (saith St Paul to Timothy) 'that which thou hast heard of me in faith and love.' These are the two hands by which we both receive and retain what we hear. Love is the best key to open the heart for receiving God's word, and the strongest lock to keep it in when we have received it. The reason why they of whom St Paul speaketh were carried away with delusions, is, because they 'received not the truth in the love of it,' 2 Thess. ii. 8. Love saith to truth, as Ruth did to Naomi, 'Where thou goest I will go; nothing shall part thee and me but death.'

4. Practise what you have heard. That meat which turneth into good nourishment stayeth with us: he that digesteth the word by obedience retaineth it by perseverance. St Paul saith of them who 'put away a good conscience,' that they 'made shipwreck of their faith,' 1 Tim. i. 21. A good conscience is as the bark, and faith as the commodity; if the bark miscarry, the commodity cannot be safe.

5. 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' *Neque enim quæ habemus ab eo, servare aut tenere possumus sine eo*, saith St Bernard:\* truly what we receive from him we cannot keep without him; as the hearing ear, so the holding hand is his gift.

6. Finally, fix your eyes on the advantage of Christian constancy, both here and hereafter, as it is set forth in the text, which leads me to the

Motive by which the duty is enforced, and that,

1. In respect of the present comfort which attendeth upon them, in whom what they have heard abideth, as it is expressed in this verse, 'If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you,

\* Bern. Sermon. iii. *qui habet*.



you also shall continue in the Son and in the Father ; in which clause are considerable, the condition required, and the benefit assured.

1. The condition required is the same with the duty prescribed in the foregoing clause, and therefore will not need any further explication, only the different manner of proposal would not be passed by, that it may appear the repetition is not needless.

That which is before expressed as the matter of a precept is here repeated as the condition of a promise, whereby is intimated to us a double necessity of this, as indeed of all other duties, namely, according to that known distinction in the schools, *præcepti et medii*, of the precept and the means.

(1.) The necessity of the precept is that whereby every creature is obliged to obey the command of its Creator. We have an usual proverb, *Must* is for the king, much more for the King of kings. It is said by the historian\* of Cæsar's soldiers, *Imperium potius quam consilium sequebantur*, receiving a precept they needed not persuasion; not *why*, but *what*, is the question which every inferior ought to make in reference to the supreme Power; and upon this account the duty of perseverance in the faith, though there were no benefit accruing to us, is necessary, because required by him.

(2.) But lo, yet another necessity of the means, which is in order to the obtaining of an end, that which is called a conditional necessity, and is true of all such means, without which it is impossible the end should be accomplished. If a man will go to an island, he must pass over the water; if he will preserve his life, he must eat and drink; if we will continue in the Father and the Son, that which we have heard must abide in us. Thus is almighty God pleased to enforce that upon us for our own sakes, which we ought to do for his sake, herein condescending to our infirmity, which stands in need of manifold obligations to our duty.

2. From the condition proceed we to the benefit, and therein take notice of these two things, its proportionality, how *suitable*, its excellency, how *precious*.

(1.) How suitable is the benefit to the condition! Here is continuance recompensed with continuance: the remaining of the word in us, that is the *duty*; remaining in the Father and the Son, that is the *mercy*. It is that which is not only here but elsewhere, and that very often, to be observed. Indeed, that which is called a geometrical proportion, not only of quality but equality, is only to be found in threatenings, between the sin and the punishment (since the largesses of mercy are far beyond our performance); and this not in all threatenings neither, only in those which denounce eternal vengeance. But the arithmetical proportion, which is of quality by way of analogy, is that which we find, as in threatenings, so in promises, between the service and the reward, and this expressed two ways.

\* Tacit.

[1.] Sometimes one contrary is promised as the recompence of another. To the mourners is assured comfort, to the hungry fulness, Mat. v. 3, 4, 6, to the humble exaltation, James iv. 10, to the poor a kingdom, and to them that sow in tears a joyful harvest, Ps. exxvi. 5; in all which how great a congruity there is, is obvious at the first view.

[2.] Sometimes like is promised as the reward of like. Thus we read of honour to them that honour God, 1 Sam. ii. 30, and love to them that love him, John xiv. 23, of giving to them that give, forgiving to them that forgive, Mat. vi. 14, Luke vi. 38, and mercy to them that are merciful, Mat. v. 7, of eternal life to them that continue in well-doing, Rom. ii. 6, and here of eternal life, and continuing in the Father and the Son, to them that continue in what they have heard.

(2.) How precious is the benefit considered in itself! You shall continue in the Son and in the Father, that is, saith the Greek father,\* *ζώνοντες ἀντὶ τοῦ ἔσεσθε*, and so the same in substance with that in the former chapter, 'Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ,' only the manner of expression is somewhat more emphatical; whilst the preposition *ἐν*, *in*, noteth the propinquity, and the verb *μεινῆτε* the permanency of this fellowship.

That question, why the Holy Ghost is not mentioned, is thus resolved by Estius,† *Quia de eo non erat oborta questio*, because as yet there was no controversy raised, and so no need of mentioning him.

If it be asked why the Son is put before the Father, the answer is well returned, Because the apostle had just before inveighed against those who, though they pretended to acknowledge the Father, yet deny the Son. Though withal there may besides be a double reason assigned: the one to insinuate that the Son is not less than the Father, but that they are equal in essence and dignity. Upon this account most probable it is that the apostolical benediction beginneth with 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' and then followeth 'the love of God the Father. The other, because, as Beda well glosseth, No man cometh to, or continueth in, the Father but by the Son, who saith of himself, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'

To draw it up, lo, here, *Erinias laus doctrina*, an high commendation of evangelical doctrine, that it leads up to Christ, and by him to the Father. The water riseth as high as the spring from whence it floweth. No wonder if the gospel, which cometh from God through Christ, lead us back again through Christ to God; and as by hearing and believing this doctrine we are united to, so by adhering to, and persevering in it, we continue in, the Son and the Father. Suitable to this is that promise of our blessed Saviour, John xiv. 23, 'If any man love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.' If we not only re-

\* Œcumen. in loc.

† Est. ibid.

ceive but keep Christ's word, he and the Father will not only come but continue with us.

They who never heard nor received the gospel are without God and without Christ; so St Paul saith of the Ephesians, chap. ii. 8, whilst they were in their heathenish condition.

They who, having heard the gospel and forsake it, are far from God and Christ. 'God himself saith, 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;' but if that which we have heard abide with us, we shall continue in the favour and affection of, in union and communion with, Christ and the Father.

And now, beloved, if the psalmist said, Ps. lxxxiv. 4, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house,' much more may I, Blessed are they that continue in the Son and in the Father. If St Peter said of being on mount Tabor with Christ at his transfiguration, 'It is good for us to be here,' much more may we say, It is good for us to be with the Son and the Father. If he that was asked where his treasure was answered,\* ὅπου Κύριος ὁ φίλος, where Cyrus was, his friend, well may the

\* Xenoph. Cyr.

Christian, ὅπου κύριος ὁ φίλος, place his wealth in the friendship of, and fellowship with, the Son and the Father.

Let me then bespeak you in those words of St Jude, ver. 18, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God,' which, though it be chiefly understood in the active sense, keep in you a love to God, yet withal it may admit a passive interpretation, keep yourselves in God's love. Nor is there any better way than by keeping God's word in ourselves. If Christ's word dwell in us, he himself will dwell with us. The ark was a blessing to Obed-edom's house; so is the gospel to the place where it is preached, much more to them who so hear as to receive, and so receive as to retain it. 'Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard, that you may continue in the Son and the Father; so much the rather when we consider what followeth in the next verse, an assurance that this continuance shall know no end, but, being begun on earth, it shall be perpetuated in heaven to all eternity. For this is th: promise which he hath promised us, eternal life, which, God willing, in our next discourse shall be unfolded.

## SERMON LV.

*And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*—1 JOHN II. 25.

**A**S there is in bad men an averseness from, so there is in the best a backwardness to, their duty. The one, through wickedness, have an antipathy, the other, through weakness, an inability to what is good. Corruption is so prevalent in those that they will not receive, and so remanent in these that they have much ado to retain, either truth in their minds or grace in their hearts. For this reason no doubt it is that almighty God is pleased by his sacred penmen, not only to impose services, but propose rewards, and to enforce his commands by arguments.

Among those many arguments by which our duty is persuaded, none more effectual than those which concern ourselves, there being in us all such a principle of self-love as puts us upon seeking our own advantage; and of all those advantages which allure to the doing our duty, none equal to that recompence of reward, that eternal life which is laid up for, promised to, and shall be conferred upon us.

How fitly hath our apostle here coupled together a difficult duty and an excellent motive. Perseverance, whether in well-believing or well-doing, is no easy task; the hands of our faith and obedience, like those of Moses, Exod. xvii. 11, are apt to grow heavy, and have need of the stone of a promise to be put under them, that they may be steady to the going down of the sun of our lives. And a sweeter, fuller promise there is not in the whole book of God than that which

we are here put in mind of: and 'this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life.'

In which words we have four particulars worthy our observation:

An excellent benefit, *eternal life*.

A sure conveyance, *hath promised*.

An eminent author, *he*.

The peculiar persons, *us*. All which, when I have severally unfolded, I shall jointly apply, and that especially with reference to that which our apostle here intends, the duty of perseverance.

1. The excellency of the benefit, though it be last in the verse, would first be considered, as it is delineated in those words, *eternal life*.

If we here examine the grammar of the Greek text, we shall find it incongruous, the accusative τὴν ζωὴν put for the nominative ἡ ζωὴ; but that which is called in rhetoric ἀντιπρῶσις, the putting of one case for another, is not unusual, and withal it is very frequent to put the antecedent in the case of the relative, as appeareth by those two instances among many others, the one Virgil's, *Urbem quam statuo vestra est*, and the other Terence's, *Populo ut placerent quas fecissent fabulas*, so here ἦν ἐπηγγειλετο τὴν ζωὴν.

The emphasis of the article prefixed before both the substantive and the adjective, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον, would not be passed by, since, as one well,\* *magnum*

\* Beza in loc.



*pondus addit orationi*, it addeth a great deal of weight to the expression, intimating that it is not an ordinary kind of life, but that which is most transcendent, whereof the apostle speaketh, and, withal, that the eternity is that which addeth much to its excellency.

That which is especially to be inquired into is, What is the benefit which is represented under these characters, and why it is so represented?

1. That happy and glorious estate which shall hereafter be enjoyed is without all doubt that which is here and elsewhere intended by this phrase 'eternal life.'

It may perhaps be here objected, that eternal life, in a strict and proper notion, may be affirmed of the miserable condition of the wicked, as well as the blessed state of the godly; for the resurrection shall be general, and the term of that resurrection shall be an union of soul and body, and that union shall be inseparable, which denominateth it eternal. In which respect St Austin saith expressly of the damned,\* *In eternum cruciari non poterint nisi viverint in eternum*, they could not be for ever tormented if they did not live eternally.

But to this it is well answered, that this word *life* is not always taken *pro nudâ existentia*, a bare existing in, but *felicî conditione*, an happy condition of life, *non magnum est diu vivere, aut semper vivere; sed magnum est beatè vivere*, saith St Austin.† It is no great matter to live long, or always, but to live happily. That loyal prayer, 'Let the king live' (in every language) imports a prosperous estate. When the psalmist saith, Ps. xxxiv. 12, 'Who is the man that would see life?' he explaineth himself presently after by 'good days.' *Vivere* among the Latins is sometimes as much as *valere*, to live is as much as to be well; and upon this account it is that as, on the one hand, the Scripture calls the state of the damned an eternal death, because their life is only a continuance in misery, so on the other, the state of the blessed an eternal life, because it is a perpetual abode in felicity.

2. Having found out what is the benefit intended, I shall now go on to enlarge in the description of it. Indeed, eternal life is a subject so sweet and pleasant, that you cannot want patience to hear of it, though withal it is so sublime and transcendent, that I want a tongue to speak of it. *Acquiri potest, exprimi non potest*, it is our comfort we may attain it, but our defect that we cannot conceive, much less express it. When we come to the fruition of this life, we shall not say with those in the psalm, Ps. xlvi. 8, 'As we have heard, so we have seen,' but with the queen of Sheba, 2 Chron. ix. 6, 'The one half was not told us;' all that can be said of that joyful eternity being but as *stilla mari*, a drop to the ocean, or *scintilla igni*, a spark to the flame. But though a perfect discovery of this bliss be impossible at such a distance as earth

is from heaven, yet in the Scripture lineaments we may behold it, and that so much of it (if we seriously view it) as that we cannot choose but be enamoured of it; nor shall I go further than my text, wherein we find a description consisting of two words.

A word of quality and prelation, *life*.

A word of quantity and duration, *eternal*.

Because men love to live, *promissa est illis vita*, saith St Austin, life is promised to them; and because they most fear death, *promissa est illis aterna*, eternal life is promised. What doest thou love? To live; this thou shalt have. What doest thou fear? To die; this thou shalt not suffer. It is life eternal; of each a word.

1. That future estate is described by *life*; and if you please to examine it, you shall find two things shadowed forth by it, namely, wherein that bliss consists, and how far it surpasseth all other enjoyments.

(1.) Inasmuch as it is called *life* it intimateth wherein that happiness consists, to wit, in the beatifical vision. To clear which, you must know that

[1.] Natural life is the union of the soul with the body, and, accordingly, supernatural life is the union of the soul with God.\* And look, as the body being united to the soul liveth, because the soul is the principle of life, so the soul united to God must needs live much more, because God is the living God, the fountain and original of life.

[2.] This union of the soul with God is double, and accordingly, with St Austin, we distinguish of a double supernatural life: *Una fide, altera specie, una in tempore peregrinationis, altera in eternitate mansionis*, there is a mediate union we have with God in this pilgrimage by faith, and there is an immediate union we have with him in that mansion by sight; that is the life of grace, this the life of glory. When St Paul saith, 2. Cor. v. 7, 'We walk by faith, and not by sight,' he expresseth the former, and withal intimateth the latter life, when we shall walk by sight and not by faith.' Thus, whereas God himself told Moses, Exod. xxxi. 8, 'No man can see me and live,' it may in this respect be inverted, No man can live without seeing God; since by seeing it is the saints have an union with and fruition of God, and so live. To which those words of the psalmist are fitly applicable, Ps. xvi. 11, 'Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy.'

(2.) In that it is called *life*, it inferreth its surpassing worth and value. To illustrate this, it would be considered that life is the most precious treasure and choicest pearl in the cabinet of nature. Though a lion be a far more noble brute than a dog, yet such is the excellency of life, that 'a living dog is better than a dead lion,' Eccles. ix. 4; though the sun be so glorious and splendid a treasure, yet *musca anima præstantior sole*, the little fly, in respect of its life, is more excellent than the sun. And as life is in itself, so is

\* Aust. de civit. Dei lib. xix. cap. xi.

† Ibid. de verb. Dom. Serm. lxiv.

\* Aug. de verb. Dom. Serm. lxiv.

it in man's estimation, among all outward blessings, of greatest worth. 'Skin for skin,' Job ii. 4, or, as it may be better rendered, 'skin after skin, one thing after another, and all a man hath' (till he be stripped to his skin) 'will a man give for his life.' Saith the father of lies truly, a man will part with his honours, his wealth, suffer bondage and pain, to save his life. The woman in the Gospel, Mark v. 26, 'spent all she had upon physicians,' and why, but to preserve her life? Had Haman's design been only to make the Jews slaves, Esther vii. 4, Esther would have been silent; but when their lives were concerned, she resolveth to petition the king. This was the singular boon which the king requested of God, Ps. xxi. 4, 'He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him.' In a word, who is the man that would see life, saith David, Ps. xxxiv. 10, and who is the man that would not see life? Scarce any man (if not besides himself) but would choose to live, though it were in poverty, exile, trouble, and misery, rather than not to live at all. By all this the preciousness of life appeareth; and in that respect, how fit an emblem of the state of bliss, which is infinitely beyond all earthly comforts, yea, in comparison of which this life (which I have told you is of so great a price) is yet vile and base; and therefore it is that this life is sometimes called *life*, without any additament. So by our blessed Saviour's answering the young man's question, Mat. xix. 16, 17, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' saith, 'If thou wilt enter into life,' as if there were no life besides that, or at least as if this life were not worthy to be called so in comparison of that.

It is well observed by an ancient,\* that *cum varia et multa seculi sint bona, illorum usus et participatio variis nominibus exprimitur*: so great is the variety of the good things of happiness, that it is expressed by several names, and those, you will find, allusive to what things are most amiable and desirable on earth. Thus it is called a rest for the people of God, Heb. iv. 9, the joy of the Lord, Mat. xx. 21, the glorious liberty of the sons of God, Rom. viii. 21. It is styled paradise, a crown, a kingdom, Luke xii. 32, 'an inheritance,' 1 Peter i. 4, 'a weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17; but of all expressions, none so frequent as this, that it is called 'life;' yea, as if this were the weightiest and choicest thing by which the worth and value of that bliss could be set forth. When it is compared to other things, still *life* is annexed: if to water, it is 'the water of life;' to a tree, 'the tree of life;' to light, 'the light of life;' to a crown, 'a crown of life,' 1 Peter v. 4, Rev. ii. 7, 10; finally, if to an inheritance, it is of the 'grace of life.' The sum is this, so manifold are the comforts of that state, that all similitudes are too narrow to express it, and therefore the Scripture useth not one, but many; and among all these things to which it is compared,

\* Andr. Caesar.

life is to be preferred far before them; and therefore not once, but often, I think I may say more often, it is called by this name, life, than by any other.

2. As the state of bliss is called life, so this life is said to be *eternal*. For the opening whereof I shall briefly discuss three things:

In what sense this life is eternal.

Why it must be eternal.

Why so often called eternal life.

In answer to the first, you must know that there is a double eternal life.

The one, that which is so both *à parte ante* and *à parte post*, having neither beginning of days nor end of time; and in this notion it is the incommunicable property of the Deity, who liveth 'from everlasting to everlasting;' and as himself is the beginning and end of all things, so he hath neither beginning nor end.

The other, that which is so *à parte post*, but not *à parte ante*, hath a beginning but no ending; and this is that life which is communicable to the holy angels and glorified saints. The greatness of this life is unmeasurable, the worth of it inestimable, the joys of it innumerable; so the duration of it is interminable. *Vite illius cursus erit sine termino, usus sine fastidio, refectio sine cibo, adjutorium sine defectu*, saith the father elegantly, that life shall be maintained without any aliment, sustained without any defect, retained without any loathing, and once obtained, shall know no ending.

2. That this life must be in this sense eternal, there needs no other medium to prove than that it is a state of bliss, which could not be were it not eternal. This will easily appear by a double argumentation, the one of St Austin, the other of Aquinas.

1. St Austin thus argues,\* If that life should end, it must be either with or against, or neither with nor against, the will of him that enjoyeth it. That he should lose it with his will is not imaginable, because he had it not against his will, yea, it is impossible that life should be happy which he that enjoyeth desireth to be rid of; nor can he lose it against his will, since that life is not to be accounted happy, which, though it be in a man's will, yet it is not in his power to keep. Nor yet is it to be imagined that a glorified person should be indifferent whether he have it or no, since if good be that which all desire, the chief good, which is blessedness, must be desired with vehemency of affection, and therefore he that is once is for ever possessed of this life.

2. Aquinas thus reasoneth,† *Beatitudo debet quietum reddere appetitum*, that only is a blessed state which quieteth the appetite and satiateth the desire, which no state can do, though never so glorious, if it be not eternal. It is not the mere fruition of the most splendid condition, which contents the mind, without an assurance of its continuance, since the very thought

\* August. de Civitate Dei, lib. xiv. cap. xxv.

† Aquin. 1a. 3æ. Quæst. v. Art. iv.



and fear of future losing would much take off the joy and bliss of present enjoying. No wonder if happiness be defined by Boetius to be \* *interminabilis vita tota simul et perfecta possessio*, a total, simultaneous, perfect, and interminable possession of life.

3. It is not unworthy our observation, that by whatsoever resemblance that future state of happiness is illustrated, *eternal* and *everlasting* is still annexed as the adjunct. Thus we read of an 'house eternal in the heavens,' 2 Cor. v. 1; an 'everlasting kingdom,' 2 Peter i. 11; an 'eternal glory,' 2 Tim. ii. 10; and 'everlasting joy,' Isa. xxxv. 10; an 'eternal inheritance,' Heb. ix. 15; and 'everlasting salvation,' Isa. v. 17; and very frequently *eternal* and *everlasting* life, Titus i. 2, Gal. vi. 8; nor is it without good reason that this epithet is made so much use of, and that especially on a double account.

(1.) *Propter eminentiam*, to advance the excellency of this life. St Austin, enlarging in the praises of this life, heapeth up a multitude of excellencies. The life, saith he, † which God hath prepared for them that love him is, *vita vitalis, beata, securo, tranquilla, pulchra, munda, casta, sancta*, a lively, happy, secure, peaceable, amiable, pure, chaste, and holy life; but still that which crowneth all is its eternity; and therefore the father goeth on, *ignara mortis, nescia tristitia*, it is a joy which cannot be interrupted with any sorrow, and a life which is altogether ignorant of death; it is *sine labe, sine dolore, sine anxietate, sine perturbatione, corruptione, et mutatione*, without spot or wrinkle, without sorrow or vexation, without change or corruption. Look as in respect of divine attributes, eternity is that which runs through and puts a lustre upon them all, so that it were little to say of God, he is holy, wise, just, good, nay, that he is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, unless we could say he is eternally all these; so is it in respect of the excellencies of that other life, they could afford little comfort were they not eternal.

(2.) *Propter differentiam*, to difference it from, and set it in opposition against, this present life. This life, how sweet severer, is but short; that life is not only sweet, but lasting, yea, everlasting. This life, as to many acts of it, is suspended by sleep, and at last wholly taken away by death; that life knoweth no cessation nor interruption, but shall be one continued act. Here, *orimur, morimur*, we no sooner begin to live, but we hasten to death; our life is like an hour-glass, which is no sooner turned up but it begins to run out, or like a lease, which is no sooner taken but it begins to expire. The longer our time past hath been on earth, that to come is so much the shorter; and the more we grow in life, the nearer we are to death. But there the sun riseth and never setteth, continually shining in its full splendour; that estate is not a lease for years, but an inheritance for ever. This life is a fading flower, a flitting shadow, a vanish-

ing vapour; but that is a flourishing laurel, an enduring substance, a fixed star. Finally, this life is so short that it may be measured by months, by days, by hours; but that is so long as it cannot be measured by years, nor jubilees, nor ages; since, when those happy saints have lived so many millions of ages as there are piles of grass on the earth, drops of water in the ocean, sands upon the sea-shore, or stars in the firmament, their life shall be as new to begin, and as long to continue, as at the first moment when they entered into the possession of it. And thus I have given you an account of the excellency of the benefit; pass we on to the

Certainty of the conveyance, in those words, 'This is the promise promised.' The explication of this branch will be despatched in two queries.

What this meaneth, that eternal life is said to be *promised*?

Why it is so emphatically called *the promise*?

1. Inquire we a little into the import of this word *promised*; and this will the better appear by considering it in a fourfold opposition, to wit, twofold in reference to him by whom, and twofold in respect of us to whom, it is promised.

(1.) In regard of him by whom it is promised, we may very well consider it as opposed to a bare intention, and a mere declaration.

[1.] Eternal life is *promised*, not only *purposed*. I confess, in one scripture *promised* is no more than *purposed*, to wit, where St Paul to Titus saith of eternal life, Titus i. 2, it was 'promised before the world began;' but according to the common notion and usual acception, *promised* is more than *purposed*. A purpose is only the thought of the heart, a promise is the fruit of the lips; a purpose is secret and hidden, a promise is open and manifest; finally, a purpose is only an intention of the mind, but a promise is the revelation of the intention. This eternal life was from all eternity *purposed*, and, being *purposed*, could not but be accomplished, for the decrees of God must stand. But had it not been *promised* as well as *purposed*, we might at last have enjoyed it, but in the mean time could not have known it; it would have been as a treasure hid, a fountain sealed, a spring shut up. God's purpose, then, is the emanation, and his promise is the signification, of his will, whereby it becomes manifest unto us. Nor yet is this all, but,

[2.] *Promised* is more than *declared*. It is one thing to reveal, and another to promise; that only maketh known, but this maketh sure; that giveth notice of, but this an interest in. When, therefore, eternal life is said to be *promised*, it doth not only mean that it is intended, but that it is manifested, yea, not only that it is manifested, but that it is assured. God hath not only set before the sons of men this eternal life as a thing in itself real and excellent, no, nor yet only as that which may possibly, yea, probably, be attained, but he hath *promised*, that is, he hath in

\* Boet. de consol.

† Aug. meditat. lib. cap. xxii.

his word given an undoubted assurance, that he will bestow it; and this is the meaning of 'hath promised.'

Nor yet is it a simple, naked promise, but such as is attended with an oath; so the author to the Hebrews expressly, Heb. vi. 17, 18, 'God, willing more abundantly to shew unto us, the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirms it by an oath: that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us;' which hope is no other than the thing hoped for, eternal life; yea, more than this, both the word and oath are upon record in holy writ, and all this hath a seal annexed to it, both the privy seal of the Spirit, and the broad seal of the holy sacraments, for our further confirmation. If, then, you will have the import of these words, 'he hath promised,' in reference to God, it is, that he hath not only resolved, but spoken it; not only spoken of such a life, but said he will give it us; yea, not only spoken, but sworn, and this not only with his lips, but it is as it were under hand and seal.

(2.) In respect of us to whom it is promised, we may look upon it in a double opposition: to actual possession, and due desert.

[1.] Eternal life is *promised*, yet not *possessed*; the promise is past, it is the preterperfect tense, *hath*, the possession to come. St Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 8, useth the future tense, 'shall give.' It is not unfitly observed, that it is the wisdom of divine dispensation, first to make a promise, and afterwards to give the thing, partly in regard of himself, *ut in iis quæ non habemus largitorem, habeamus debitorem*, saith St Austin excellently, that where he is not a donor he may become a debtor, and may glorify not only his goodness in giving the thing, but his faithfulness in making good his word; partly in regard of us, that he may give us occasion of exercising our faith, hope, and patience, since on the one hand, if it were presently given, there were no use for hope to expect, and patience to wait; and on the other hand, if it were not promised, there were no ground for faith to believe.

[2.] Eternal life is promised to, not deserved by, us. I confess these two are not necessarily opposed, there is a promise which is an act of justice, as when a debtor promiseth the payment of his debts, or a master promiseth the labourer his hire, the servant his wages; but withal there is a promise, which is an act of grace and mercy, as when a king promiseth a malefactor a pardon, or a friend promiseth another a courtesy. And of this latter sort are all God's promises to us, especially this of eternal life, which is infinitely beyond whatever we can, or whatsoever he requireth we should do, or suffer. 'I reckon,' saith St Paul, and I hope he is not out in his reckoning, 'that the sufferings' (surely, then, the doings) 'of this present life are not worthy the glory which shall be revealed.' Devout Anselm said truly, *Si homo mille annis serviret Deo ferventissimè, non mereretur ex con-*

*digno dimidium diei esse in regno eorum*, if a man could serve God most fervently a thousand years together, it would not deserve one half day's, much less an eternal, fruition of that life. Indeed, the promise being past, it is just with God to perform it, in which respect, St Paul expects this crown from God as a 'righteous judge,' 2 Tim. iv. 8; but withal, since mere mercy moved him to promise, and what we do as the condition is no way equivalent to the reward, it is a gift of mere grace; and therefore our Saviour teacheth his disciples to expect it from God as a merciful Father: Luke xii. 33, 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' and the same St Paul expressly calls it a gift, Rom. vi. 23, 'Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' And so much in answer to the first question.

2. If it shall in the next place be inquired why eternal life is called *the promise*, the answer is given by St Peter, 2 Peter i. 4, where, speaking of the promises of eternal life, he calls them 'exceeding great and precious.'

(1.) The promise, because an exceeding precious promise. All other promises whatsoever being put in the one scale, and this in the other, this will infinitely preponderate them. Look what the paper and pack-thread are in respect of the commodity for which we bargain, that are all the promises of this life in respect of those which concern that to come, circumstantial, and of no value. Not only so, but,

(2.) The promise, because an exceeding great promise, it is as it were the centre in which all other promises meet; it is such a promise as without which all the other would afford little comfort. What a figure is to the cyphers, that is this promise to the rest, without which they signify nothing; it is the fundamental promise, upon which all the rest are bottomed. Because God hath promised eternal life, therefore he will not stick at anything else, yea, whatsoever promises he hath made are in order to this; therefore he promiseth earthly things, that they may help us to heavenly. Nor are temporals any further within the promise than they are subservient to eternal, therefore he promiseth his Spirit, and the graces of his Spirit, that by them we may be fitted for glory; therefore he promised to send his only begotten Son, that we might through him obtain eternal life; and since it is as it were the *Alpha*, the first, the chief of all promises, yea, the *Omega*, the end to which they lead, it may well be called the promise. And so you see the second particular unfolded, which is the certain conveyance.

3. The eminency of the author by whom this promise is made cometh next to be considered, in the relative *he*.

If you cast your eyes on the preceding verse you will find the antecedent to this relative, namely, 'the Father and the Son.' Our Saviour tells the disciples



it was 'the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom;' and it is his good pleasure in the mean time to give them the promise of it. But because the Father promiseth it by the Son, therefore interpreters look upon the Son as the antecedent, so much the rather, because throughout this epistle, when the apostle useth this pronoun *he*, he meaneth Christ.

Indeed, a caution must be here inserted, that if we understand this *he* to be the Son, we do not so construe it as if eternal life were not promised before Christ came. As the Father 'hath spoken to us in these last days by his Son,' so he spake to them that were before, at divers times, and divers manners, and that concerning eternal life. I well know that the Socinians positively assert the first promise of eternal life to be made by Christ, and it is not to be denied, but that some of the fathers seem to incline to this opinion: St Jerome, where he saith,\* the kingdom of heaven was not promised in the Old Testament; Theophylact, who maketh this distinction between the law and the gospel,† that to the law only temporal promises are annexed, but in the gospel eternal promises are revealed; but how improbable this opinion is, will appear by several considerations. The author to the Hebrews, chap. xi. 16, saith of the patriarchs, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, that they desired a better country, that is, an heavenly; and could they have desired it if they had not known it, and could they have known it if God had not revealed it? In the same chapter, ver. 9, it is said of Abraham in particular, that he 'looked for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God.' Is not that city the Jerusalem which is above, and could he with any confidence have looked for it, if God had not promised it? That 'recompence of reward,' ver. 26, which Moses had an eye to when he forsook the honours and pleasures of Pharaoh's court, to 'suffer affliction with the people of God,' was certainly more than temporal, for otherwise how could it have justly preponderated the contentments he might have had, or recompensed the sufferings he made choice of? Nor could he have had respect to it, if it had not been set before him. Not to enlarge, when our blessed Saviour, Luke xix. 20, refers the young man to the law of Moses, for answer to the question, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' and when, John v. 39, he exhorts the Jews to 'search the Scriptures, for in them you think to have eternal life;' doth he not plainly intimate, that in the law of Moses, and scriptures of the prophets, eternal life is made known, together with the way that leads to it? In one word, the resurrection of the dead, the term whereof is eternal life, is expressly called by the apostle Paul, Acts xxvi. 6, the 'promise of God made unto the fathers.'

This, then, is the promise which he hath promised; not that it was not at all promised before, but not so fully, so clearly. Eternal life was promised in the

Old Testament, rather typically than literally, in general phrases than in express terms, and hence it is that they were but a few comparatively who understood anything by those promises concerning it, whereas now, according to St Paul's expression, 2 Tim. i. 10, Christ 'hath brought light and immortality to light through the gospel,' which plainly maketh it manifest to us. In which respect the promises of the gospel are called by the author to the Hebrews, chap. viii. 6, 'better promises;' not as to the things promised, which are the same for substance, but as to the easiness of the condition, and chiefly the clearness of the revelation.

It will not now be amiss to consider a while who this *he* is, by whom this promise is so punctually promised; nor need we any further character of him than what is given before in this very chapter.

It is he that is righteous, and therefore cannot deceive. It is he that is the holy one, and therefore cannot lie; so that since it is he that hath promised, it must be performed. It is he who is an 'advocate with the Father,' to plead for our admission into heaven; who is 'the propitiation for our sins,' to wit, by his blood, which is also the purchase of this life. It is he who is the Christ, anointed to the office of a prophet, that he might reveal to, of a priest, that he might obtain for, and of a king, that he might confer on us, this eternal life. Finally, it is he who is the Son; and being the Son, is the heir; and being the heir, hath a title to this life, not only to enjoy it himself, but to impart it to us. By all which it appeareth, that whereas men oftentimes promise those things which they have no power or right to give, yea, sometimes they promise what they never intend to give, and hence it is that their promises are vain, lying, and deceitful; he that hath promised hath power and will to give it, he saith nothing but what he really intends, and will certainly fulfil. And now, if you would know to whom this promise belongs, go on to a view of the next and last particular, which is the,

4. Propriety of the persons, in the pronoun *us*. It is that which may be looked upon, both in a way of enlargement and of restriction.

(1.) In a way of enlargement, *us*, not *me* only. The promise was not peculiarly to the apostles, but to all true Christians; upon this account St Paul elsewhere, 2 Tim. iv. 8, speaking of this benefit, under the name of a 'crown of righteousness,' saith, it is that which 'the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day; and not me only, but all them that love his appearing.' In other races, though never so many run, yet only one obtains the prize, but this prize is given to all Christian runners. That which entitled St John to this life, was not his new office of an apostle, but his new birth as a Christian. So much the apostle Peter implieth when he saith, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us to a lively hope, to an inheritance; and the mean-

\* Hier. lib. i. adv. Pelag.

† Theoph. in Luke i.

est Christian is begotten of God as well as any of the apostles. It is not grace in strength, but truth, which is the condition of glory; and therefore this *us* taketh in all those sorts of Christians before mentioned, not only fathers but young men, nay, little children.

(2.) In a way of restriction, *us*; not *all*, but *us*, who are thus and thus qualified; and if you please you may take in all those who are before expressed in this chapter: *us*, who keep his commandments, ver. 3, for the promise and the precept are knit together, nor can any partake of the one, who do not keep the other; *us*, who walk as Christ walked, ver. 6, for we cannot expect to attain the end which he hath promised, if we do not walk in the way which he hath walked in, and which leads to the end; *us*, who love our brother, ver. 11; this being the old and the new commandment, must be obeyed if we will enter into life; *us*, who love not the world, nor the things of the world, ver. 15, for he is unworthy of the life in that world to come who doateth with the love of this; *us*, who acknowledge the Son, since only he that hath the Son hath life, ver. 22; finally and principally, *us*, in whom that abideth which we have heard from the beginning, ver. 24.

Indeed, if you mark it, you shall still find the promises of eternal life made to perseverance: 'to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life.' So St Paul to the Romans: chap. ii. 7, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness;' so the same apostle concerning himself, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; not to multiply instances, in those seven epistles to the seven angels of the churches of Asia, we find eternal life promised under several metaphors, but still the condition prefixed is, 'to him that overcometh,' not to him that fighteth, but who continueth fighting till he overcome; so true is that of St Bernard, whereas all the virtues run in the race, it is perseverance alone which carrieth away the reward. And thus I have given you an account of all the parts of the text.

I close up all in one word of application, and that,

1. In general, is there an eternal life promised? Why then do we not believe it? and if we do believe it, why do we not prize it? and if we prize it, why do we not seek after it? Were it possible that men should be so much in love with this life, did they believe there were another? or could they doat so much on a frail fading life, did they believe there were one that is eternal? If we view the practices of the sons and daughters of men, we may sadly observe that this life is ever providing for, as if it should never end, and that life is never prepared for, as if it should never begin, whereas this life shall soon end, but that never. We see, saith St Austin,\* the lovers of this present

\* Aug. de verb. dom. serm. 64.

life using their utmost care and cost to preserve it, and all they can do is only *ut differant, non auferant mortem*, to delay that death which they cannot prevent. If men are solicitous, *ut aliquantum plus vivatur*, that they may live a little longer, *quomodo agendum est, ut semper vivatur*, how studious should they be that they may live for ever!

Oh that we would at length be effectually convinced of the certain and infallible verity of this promise in itself, and then there would be little need to persuade our endeavours, to make sure our own interest in it. Cleombrotus, reading of this future immortality, though but darkly delineated in Plato's writings, by casting himself into the sea, dispossessed himself of this life that he might be the sooner possessed of that. Far be his practice from our imitation; we are taught to wait God's leisure for the accomplishment of this promise, but surely the due consideration of an eternal life will teach us to make a preparation for that the main business of this life, ever remembering that this moment is given us by God to be the only opportunity of gaining that eternity.

In special, *memoria promissæ mercedis perseverantem te faciat in opere*, since eternal life is promised by him to us, let that which we have heard from him abide in us. True perseverance in the faith is very difficult, and sometimes proveth dangerous; but it is as true, eternal life is very excellent and advantageous. *Videamus quid promisit*, saith St Austin,\* let us seriously view what it is he hath promised. Not gold nor silver, houses, lands, or any earthly possessions; and yet what will not men endure for the gaining of these? Shall not eternal life have a stronger influence upon us? Oh consider, on the one hand, what is it thou canst probably gain by forsaking the truth: perhaps favour with great ones, large revenues, stately palaces, honourable titles. But tell me in good earnest, can these countervail the loss of eternal life? Undoubtedly they cannot. On the other hand, what is it thou canst possibly lose by retaining the truth? Perhaps thy estate, thy liberty, thy life. Ay, but what thinkest thou? Will not eternal life make amends for all these losses? Certainly it will. As therefore the runners of old were wont to engrave the reward upon the palms of their hands, that when they began to faint the sight of that might revive them, so let us encourage ourselves to a patient abiding in the doctrine which we have heard, notwithstanding all opposition, by a serious remembrance of the promised remuneration, eternal life; and so much the rather, because it is promised upon this condition, and is no otherwise to be expected. To end therefore, hast thou begun well by embracing the faith? Lose not the reward for want of adhering, but hold it fast to the end, that thou mayest receive in the end this life which shall be without end.

\* Aug. in loc. et in evang. Joh. tract. xxiii.



## SERMON LVI.

*These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which you have received from him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, ye may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*—1 JOHN II. 26–28.

IF you compare these three with the eight foregoing verses, you shall find them to be a summary repetition of what is there more largely delivered. There are three hinges upon which the precedent discourse turneth, namely, the peril of antichristian doctrine, the benefit of the Spirit's unction, the duty of perseverance in the Christian faith; and these three are inculcated in these verses. Indeed, where the danger is very great, the admonition cannot be too frequent. When the benefit is of singular advantage, it would be often considered, and a duty which must be performed cannot be too much pressed. No wonder if St John proposed them in this gemination to our second thoughts. And yet it is not a naked repetition neither, but such as hath a variation and amplification in every particular. The duty is reinforced at the eight-and-twentieth verse, but in another phrase, of 'abiding in Christ,' and with a new motive, drawn from the second coming of Christ. The benefit is reiterated, and much amplified, in the seven-and-twentieth verse, as to its excellency and energy. Finally, the danger is repeated, but with another description of those by whom they were in danger; whilst as before he had called them antichrists for their enmity against Christ, so here, for their malignity against Christians, he calleth them seducers: 'These things have I written to you concerning them that seduce you,' &c.

By what you have already heard, you see the scope of those verses, which (according to their number) divide themselves into three generals.

A caution, 'These things have I written,' &c.

A comfort, 'But the anointing which you have received,' &c.

A counsel, 'And now, little children, abide in him,' &c.

1. Begin, and at this time end we with the caution, which is given in the six-and-twentieth verse, 'These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.'

As it is in the world, so is it also in the church. In the world, all good and useful things have their contraries: there are fruitful showers, and there are harmful storms; there are refreshing dews, and infecting vapours; there are wholesome herbs, and there are noisome drugs; there are tame living creatures, and there are wild beasts. Thus, in the church, there are sound and there are rotten professors, true and false prophets, faithful and deceitful apostles; and

if you look upon this verse, you may find a brand set upon the one, and a character given of the other, whilst the two parts of the text are,

The mischievous design of the antichrists, which was to seduce, 'them that seduce you;' and the pious care of St John, which was to give warning, 'These things have I written to you concerning them.'

1. In handling the former of these, I shall take notice of these three things:

The *who?* them; *whom?* you; *what?* seduce.

1. If you inquire who these seducers were, we shall find two things not unworthy our observation.

1. That their names are not mentioned. It may perhaps be asked, since the apostle doth not name them, how should they know them? and if they could not know them, how should they avoid them? But to this it is easily answered, that

He had sufficiently described them before by their antichristian doctrine, so that of whomsoever they heard such positions, they might conclude them to be the persons; and since in this respect there was no necessity of mentioning, it is justly looked upon as an act of prudence, his concealing their names. Indeed, we find this apostle in one of his epistles, 3 John 5, expressly naming Diotrephes, and St Paul naming Hymeneus, and Alexander, Phygellus, and Hermogenes, in his epistle to Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 20, ii. 1, 15. There may be sometimes urgent reason of mentioning names, but for the most part both these apostles are silent in this particular; and those other apostles, St Peter and St Jude, though they are large and sharp in their invectives against those heretics, yet they name not any. The reason of this is not unfitly given by Lorinus upon the text,\* to wit, *ne magis irritarentur*, to avoid all exasperation; and it is a good note he infers upon it, *abstinendum quoad fieri potest à cujusquam publicâ notâ*, as much as may be, we must abstain from throwing dirt in the faces of particular persons, though they be flagitious in life, or erroneous in doctrine. Very apposite to this purpose is that gloss of Theophylact,† on these words of St Paul, 'many walk of whom I have told you often,' &c., *οὐκ ὀνομαστί τοῦτους λέγει ἵνα μὴ πλεῖστη ἀλλὰ δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς ἀναγνῶναι, τοῦτους οὐς γὰρ εἶπαι πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν*, he intimateth who they were, in saying, I have told you often, but he doth not nominate, lest he should provoke them. In that parabolical narration

\* Lorin. in loc.

† Theoph. in Phil

of Dives and Lazarus, the rich man's name is not mentioned; the reason whereof is generally conceived to be, that our Saviour thought him not worthy the naming; upon which account Ignatius would not insert,\* *τὰ ὀνόματα ἄπιστα*, the faithless names of certain heretics in his writings. But that note of Maldonate may very well be allowed, and it is very suitable to the present matter, it was the prudent moderation of our Saviour, *ut pauperem quem laudaret nominaret, divitem quem vituperabat non nominaret*, to mention the beggar's name whom he did commend, but to conceal the rich man's whom he did condemn. That rule which is given, though not so well observed by the epigrammatist,† is fit to be followed by all preachers and writers,

Parcere personis, dicere de vitiis,

to reprove sins and spare persons, to confute errors and conceal names. That character of the philosopher, *insectatur vitia, non homines*, he inveighed against vices, not men, well befits a preacher. When we praise and commend the good, it should be with reflection on persons, and that by name, for their greater encouragement; but when we reprove or condemn the evil, it should be (unless for some weighty reasons) without naming persons, to avoid provocation, whilst those who on such an occasion are named, are apt to suppose it as an argument of ill will, and so, instead of being bettered by the reproof, to be embittered against the reprovor.

2. Their office (to which probably some of them were called, and which no doubt all of them pretended) was to teach and instruct the people. Thus in all ages there have not wanted seducers among the teachers of the church. God complained by his prophet Isaiah, chap. iii. 12, ix. 16, 'The leaders of this people caused them to err;' so by Jeremiah, chap. xxiii. 13, 'I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria, they have prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.' Upon this account the pharisees are called by our Saviour, 'blind guides,' Mat. xxiii. 16, and those seducers, by St Paul, 'false apostles,' and both by St Peter and St John, false prophets, 2 Peter ii. 1, 1 John iv. 1. And truly, though this be too common, it is very sad. What more incongruous than blindness in a guide, injustice in a judge, ignorance in a scholar, and heresy in a teacher! Those sheep must needs wander, which either are without a shepherd, or whose shepherd misleads them. Oh what need is there of earnest prayer, that God would give us 'pastors after his own heart,' which may feed us with wisdom and understanding! And so much for the *who*.

2. That which next cometh to be considered, is the *whom*? you, that is, saith Grotius,‡ *Judeos, ex quorum gente rōs estis*, many of the Jews whose

\* Ignat. ad Smyrn. ep. x.

‡ Grot. in loc.

† Mart. Epigr.

countrymen you are, who were seduced by them; but more rationally say others, you, that is, you who have received the unction, and abide in the faith, to whom I have written this epistle. But if those were the *you*, how is it that these false teachers are challenged with seducing them, since they were not seduced, but continued stedfast in the faith? The solution of this objection is presently made, by distinguishing between the intent and event, the endeavour and the effect. These false teachers did seduce them in design, who yet were not actually seduced by them; and because they did endeavour to do it, therefore they are charged as if they had done it.

It is a note not unworthy our observation before we go any further, that whatsoever evil is inchoated by a resolved endeavour, and only impeded by divine prevention, is as if it had been consummated by a complete execution. True it is, the sin is the grosser and the guilt the greater when a wicked attempt is accomplished, but still the very intent, much more the attempt, denominateth a man guilty.

He that soliciteth a woman's chastity, though he never commit the outward act, is an adulterer; he that contriveth and striveth to take away a man's life, though he do not kill him, is a murderer; and he that preacheth false doctrine to the people, with an intent to deceive them, is a seducer, though his hearers are not infected by him. We see in man's law he that breaketh open a man's house, though his stealing be prevented, is looked upon as a thief. He that plotteth a treason against his sovereign, though he do not execute it, is adjudged as a traitor; and surely it must much more hold true in God's law, which is therefore more strict, because more large in its extent than man's.

Nor is it without just reason that thus it should be, since he that endeavoureth would accomplish were he not hindered; and that the act is not correspondent to the design, is not for want of will, but power. It was no thanks to Balak or Balaam that the people of Israel were not cursed, nor to Saül that David was not destroyed, nor to Haman that the Jews were not cut off. Now that wherein the sinfulness of sin consists is in the voluntariness of it; and therefore, as where the act is done against the will it is excusable, so where the will is bent, though the act be not done, it is culpable. Who would not be enraged at him who, knowing himself to have a plague-sore running about him, should run into every house and thrust himself into every company, and censure him as worthy of punishment, though, perhaps, through God's mercy, none were infected by him? Oh let us repent, not only of our evil deeds, but our wicked attempts, and accuse ourselves as well for what we would have done as what we have done.

And withal, it is that which holds true on the other hand, and would be taken notice of for the comfort of the good. *Mens boni studii ac pii voti etiamsi effectum non invenerit, habet tamen præmium voluntatis*, saith



Salvian excellently,\* in all honest and pious endeavours, though the work be not effected, the will shall be rewarded. When the child taketh the bow into his hand, puts the arrow into the bow, draweth it as far as he can, the father accepteth it, as if he had drawn it to the head and hit the mark. It is said of Abraham by St James, chap. ii. 21, that he offered Isaac his son upon the altar, when yet not Isaac but the ram was offered; and good reason, since on Abraham's part there was nothing wanting. According to God's command, Gen. xxii. 3, 6, 9, he rose up early in the morning, saddled his ass, took Isaac his son with him, clave the wood, went to the place, built an altar, prepared the fire, laid the wood on the altar, Isaac on the wood, took the knife to slay him, and had not an angel from God prevented him, he had actually slain him. Where God denieth ability or opportunity, he always accepts the will for the deed.

It is that which may more particularly be taken notice of for the comfort of the ministers of the gospel, who, sincerely endeavouring the conversion of sinners, though they prove not successful, shall be looked upon by God as if they were. A pilot (saith Quintilian)† cannot be denied his lawful plea, though the ship miscarry, whilst he holdeth the helm aright and saileth by the compass; nor shall he who carefully steereth the course of his ministry by the compass of God's word be found guilty, though the ship whereof he is pilot sink into perdition. That promise in the book of Daniel, chap. xii. 3. 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever,' is probably to be understood, in the first clause, of all the godly, who are most truly wise, and in the second, of the prophets of God, who are said to turn many to righteousness (even when perhaps they do not turn any), in respect of their cordial desires and earnest labours, as here false prophets and teachers are charged to seduce them, whom yet they did not seduce, because of their design and endeavour.

3. The last and chief thing considerable in this part of the text is the *what?* the act, in that word *seduce*. Indeed, venerable Bede‡ by these seducers understands all those who by fair or foul means draw men to any evil, and thereby hinder them from partaking the promise of eternal life mentioned in the former verse; but I rather with the stream of interpreters expound these seducers to be the heretical antichrists spoken of before, though in the handling I shall reflect on all that seduce to any evil.

The Greek word here used most properly belongs to travellers when they wander out of the way. From thence it is applied in the first place to erring, which is a wandering from the way of truth; so in that of St James, chap. i. 16, 'Do not err, my beloved brethren;' and in the next to seducers, which is a causing others

to err, so here and many other places. Indeed, Aretius on the text\* taketh in both, *τοὺς πλανῶντας*, *Id est qui errant, et alios in errorem trahunt*, them that seduce, that is, them who err themselves, and draw others into it. That which would here be observed is the evil temper of heretics, who, having espoused an error, are very solicitous to beget children by causing others to err. For this cause they are compared by St Jude to wandering stars, by which we are not to understand the planets in the heaven (which are so called because by reason of their various motions they seem in the eye of the vulgar to wander), but the fiery meteors in the air, which are called stars, for that resemblance they have to stars in outward appearance, which being hurried up and down by the wind themselves, do oftentimes misguide the unwary traveller into bogs and fens. Thus, having before borrowed a metaphor from the air, resembling these false teachers to 'clouds without rain,' Jude 13, for their vain-glorious boasting; from the earth, comparing them to withered trees, for their barren conversations; from the water, resembling them to the raging waves of the sea, for their furious cruelty; so, taking in all the elements, he borroweth a metaphor from the fire, comparing them to wandering stars or meteors, because of their mischievous misleading; for as these, especially the *ignes fatui* (as they are called) foolish fires, being carried up and down by the wind, have themselves an uncertain motion, and misguide the traveller into a wrong path; so did those heretics, having themselves forsaken the way, entice others to follow them: in which respect St Paul saith of these seducers, 2 Tim. iii. 14, that they 'wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.'

Nor is this less observable in other sorts of sinners. Jeroboam having set up calves at Dan and Bethel, engaged the people to worship them. Absalom, having a rebellious design against his king and father, David, attempts to steal away the hearts of the people from him. The harlot, resolving to prostitute herself, goeth forth to invigle the next young man she meets to her wanton embraces, Prov. iii. 15, and those bloody miscreants call upon others, saying, 'Come let us lie in wait for blood,' Prov. i. 11.

Thus there is in wicked men a kind of itching desire to make others as bad as themselves; and perhaps this is the meaning of the phrase in the prophet, Isa. i. 19, 'They draw iniquity,' to wit, by drawing others to iniquity. Indeed, herein they follow the suggestion of that prince of darkness; for as it was Christ's charge to Peter, 'Being converted, strengthen thy brethren,' so it is the devil's to his agents, Being perverted, pervert thy brethren; nay, hereby it is, they do not only obey the command, but imitate that pattern of their father the devil, who, not standing in the truth, with too happy, or rather unhappy, a success, endeavoured man's fall, that as he with his evil angels were thrown out of heaven, so Adam with his posterity

\* Satv. de Guber.

† Bed. in loc.

‡ Quintil. &amp;c., clam. lib. iii.

\* Aret. in loc.

might be cast out of an earthly, and kept out of an heavenly, paradise,

And now I would to God all heretics would consider how great an evil this is, to be a seducer. It is bad to be an actor of evil ourselves, but far worse to be an enticer. It is bad to be seduced by, but much worse to be a seducer of, others. We seldom find Jeroboam the son of Nebat mentioned but with this mark, 'that made Israel to sin,' no doubt for his greater infamy. When Elymas endeavoured to turn away the deputy from the faith, Acts xiii. 10, St Paul is enraged with an holy zeal, and in him giveth every seducer his due brand, 'Thou full of all subtilty and mischief, child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness.' We are not able to answer for our own sins, we had not need contract upon us the guilt of others; we cannot pay our own scores, there is no reason for us to make others' debts ours. God knoweth we have sins enough, as so many sons, of our own, why should we adopt others? Yet so doth the seducer (whilst without timely repentance), he must give an account for all those souls which he hath either in design or effect seduced, either to error of doctrine or evil of manners; and surely if 'they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the sun in heaven,' they who turn many from it to error and wickedness shall burn as coals in hell. But I fear seducing heretics, whilst they have open mouths and nimble tongues to the perverting of others, have their ears heavy, nay, closed, lest they should be converted themselves; and therefore, though I shall not cease to pray for, I shall forbear any longer to speak to, them.

The improvement that should be made of this doctrine by the godly and orthodox, is,

(1.) That we take heed of going amongst, or conversing with, heretics, lest we be seduced by them. Indeed, it were ground enough of abstaining their society, lest we should be thought such, but much more, lest we should prove such. This holy apostle would not stay in the bath with that arch-heretic Cerinthus, out of a just indignation against him. We should not frequent the company of such, out of a wise circumspection in reference to ourselves. The orthodox hearers of Athanasius forsook the church, when Lucius, the Arian bishop, came to preach. Both the private society, and more public meetings, of heretics should be avoided by us; it is ill coming within the breath of such rotten persons. There is not more danger of being burned by coming too near the fire, of being defiled by touching pitch or dirt, and of being infected by coming near one that is sick of the plague, than of being seduced by hearkening to, and having familiarity with, heretics.

It is that, indeed, which may be extended, and I would to God were observed as a general rule in regard of all wicked company. 'Come out from among her, my people' (saith God, concerning Babylon, Rev. xix. 4), 'lest thou be partaker of her sins.' 'Depart

from me, you evil doers' (saith David, Ps. cxix. 115), 'for I will keep the commandments of my God.' Wicked men will strive to make us like themselves; nor have we any promise of assistance against their enticements, if we needlessly associate with them. The psalmist saith, Ps. i. 1, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not after the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners.' Indeed, he that would not walk in the wicked's counsel, must not stand in his way, lest, if the wicked find him in his way, he entice him to go along with him.

(2.) That they obliquely imitate these seducers, in striving to make others as sound in the faith and conscientious in their lives as themselves. Why should (and how often is it so) the devil's instruments be more forward than Christ's servants, his messengers more active than Christ's ministers? Did Heliogabalus take care to make his son like himself, luxurious? and shall not religious parents endeavour that their children may serve the Lord? Did the pharisees 'compass sea and land to make a proselyte?' and shall not Christ's apostles do as much to make Christians? Are the wolves ranging up and down to worry? and shall not the shepherds be watchful to preserve the sheep? Are heretics industrious to seduce from, and shall not the orthodox be solicitous to reduce to, the truth? God forbid. Oh let the heavenly stars as readily give forth their light to guide the people into the way of truth and peace, as those fiery meteors are to lead them into the bogs and ditches of sin and errors. 'Them that seduce you.'

But this is not all that our apostle intends by this expression. The word here rendered *seduce*, is elsewhere in this epistle, 1 John i. 8, yea, generally through the New Testament, translated *deceive*; and accordingly *planus*, which is derived from it, is used by the Latin poet\* to signify an impostor. Now *decipimur specie recti*, we are deceived by specious pretences; and accordingly such a kind of seducing, which is, by making us believe we are in the right when we are in the wrong way, is that which is here meant.

It lets us see what is the cunning of heretical seducers. St Paul saith of them, Rom. xvi. 8, that 'by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple;' like the hyena, which, when she intends to devour, feigneth a man's voice. St Austin observeth,† that the devil, seeing his temples forsaken, altars demolished, and oracles silenced, by Christ's coming into the world, to make a new supply of his kingdom, stirred up certain heretics (of whom Christ himself foretold, and whom, no doubt, our apostle here meaneth, Mat. xxiv. 4), *qui sub vocabulo Christiano, doctrinae resisterent Christiana*, who under the name of Christian doctrine should oppose Christianity, like pirates, who hang out their colours, whom they meant to surprise. Indeed, it hath ever been the

\* Horat.

† Aug. de Civit. lib. i.



practice of false teachers, to lead into error by a pretext of truth, like those (to use Irenæus his comparison\*), who gave lime mixed with water, instead of milk, deceiving by the similitude of the colour, herein, as St Paul observeth, learning of their master the devil, who, though the prince of darkness, oftentimes 'transformeth himself into an angel of light,' 2 Cor. xi. 14. The truth is, as the fore-mentioned father† observeth, ἡ πλάνη γὰρ αὐτὴν μὲν οὐκ ἐπιδείκνυται, error loveth not to appear naked, as, being foul and ugly, no wonder if she cover herself with borrowed robes, that she may be the more amiable.

It will not, I suppose, be a digression from the text, nor loss of time, to inquire into the *κρυβεῖαν* and *μεθοδείαν τῆς πλαιῆς* (to use St Paul's language, Eph. iv. 14), sleights and methods of error, whereby these seducers lie in wait to deceive; and these we shall find to be of many sorts. Heretics, Proteus-like, make use of several shapes, under which they delude many. In particular, we may observe them seducing by the mixture of some truths, the promise of much liberty, the plea of long tradition, and the show of glorious miracles, under the veil of an outside religion, the varnish of human reason, the colour of divine revelation, the gloss of sacred Scripture, and the name of the true church.

1. A mixture of truth with error is an usual trick of these impostors, herein doing like those who put off lead or brass in coins with the mingling of silver, or who convey poison in milk, or some such wholesome food. This St Gregory took notice of, † when he saith of heretics, *miscent recta perversis, ut ostendendo bona auditores ad se pertrahant, et exhibendo mala latentis peste corrumpant*, they join right doctrines with perverse, that by an open publication of the one they may secretly instil the other. Even these antichrists did acknowledge some truth, preaching a Christ that came from heaven, but withal denying Jesus to be the Christ.

2. A promise of liberty is another cheat of these jugglers, as well knowing how suitable liberty is to man's corrupt nature. Heretics, how rigid soever they may be upon design in their personal practice, yet are commonly libertines in their doctrine, indulging to their followers a lawless licentiousness. This St Peter and St Jude observed in these antichrists, of whom the one saith, 2 Peter ii. 19, they did 'promise to the people liberty,' and the other, Jude 4, that they did 'turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.'

3. The plea of tradition is much used by heretics; all nations and persons, both Jews and Gentiles, being very tenacious of those things which they have received from their ancestors. By traditions it was that the pharisees in Christ's time endeavoured to 'make the law of God of none effect;' and with tradi-

tions it was that the heretics, in the apostles' time, did spoil the people of the truth; for so much St Paul intimateth, when he giveth that *caveat*, Col. ii. 8, 'Beware lest any man spoil you through vain deceit, after the traditions of men.' Not that all sorts of traditions are to be slighted; yea, the traditions which have been delivered and received in the universal church from age to age, are to be regarded by us *next* to the written word, but not in *opposition* against, or in *competition* with it. Such vain superstitious traditions were those which the apostle condemned, and which the heretics made use of.

4. A show of miracles is that which is sometimes made by these deceivers. Look, as of old, when Moses and Aaron wrought miracles, Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian sorcerers, imitated them; so in the beginning of Christianity, as God confirmed it by real miracles, so the devil opposed it with lying wonders. This was our Saviour's prediction concerning these antichristian seducers, whereof my text speaketh, 'There shall come false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew signs and wonders,' so St Mark, chap. xiii. 44; so St Matthew, chap. xxiv. 4, to seduce and deceive, 'if it were possible, the very elect.' And thus the coming of the man of sin is said by St Paul, 2 Thes. ii. 9, to be 'after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,' where that epithet of *lying* would not be passed by, those wonders which the devil worketh by heretics being lying, not only because they accompany doctrines of lies, but likewise because they are for the most part delusions, not realities. Nor are the greatest of those wonders above the power of nature; and, therefore, though they are matter of wonder to us, who oftentimes cannot understand how they are wrought, yet they are not so in themselves. But surely there is no device more subtle and prevailing than this, men being very apt to believe that their words are oracles whose works are miracles; and, indeed, were they so really, it were a sufficient ground of belief; but as they are, to wit, only so in appearance, they have too great an influence upon the vulgar.

5. A veil of religion is many times put on by these cheaters: their garb, their look, their language, speak nothing but holiness, whilst their doctrines breathe nothing but heresy. As too many of the orthodox dishonour their teaching well by living ill, so do many heretics credit their ill-teaching by well-living. It is one of St Paul's characters of seducers, 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'having a show of godliness;' and Gregory Nazianzen saith of the Macedonians,\* that their life was admirable, whilst their doctrine was abominable. Thus, as harlots paint their faces, and perfume their beds, to allure, heretics feign godliness, and profess religion to seduce.

6. A varnish of reason is drawn over false opinions by these seducers, because that is very taking with a

\* Iren. ad Hæc. lib. iii. cap. xix.

† Id. Præfat. lib. i.

‡ Greg. Mor. lib. v. cap. xii.

\* Gr. Naz. orat. 44.

rational creature. This St Paul intimateth in that fore-mentioned caution: Col. ii. 8, 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.' Accordingly, Tertullian observeth,\* that the ancient heresies concerning the *Eones* were fetched from Plato's *ideas*, the equality of the first matter with God from Zeno, the death of the soul from Epicurus, and the denial of the resurrection of the body, *de unâ omnium philosophorum scholâ*, from the schools of all the philosophers. Upon this account it is that the father† elsewhere asserts philosophers to be the patriarchs of heretics, and that all heresies are founded upon, and supported by, the rules and dictates of philosophy: not that philosophy and natural reason is to be rejected by the orthodox, as of no use; nay, indeed, it is an help to divinity, when in its right place; but our divinity must not be regulated by philosophy, and our religion bounded by reason. The orthodox use her as an handmaid to wait, but the heterodox make her a mistress to seduce.

7. The colour of a revelation is oftentimes used to set off lying doctrine. When St Paul saith, Gal. i. 8, 'If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed,' he intimateth that some might pretend to bring another gospel from heaven; and indeed such there were who broached fictitious gospels as if they had been divinely inspired. Simon Magus pretended himself to be the Holy Ghost, so did Montanus, and vented the dreams of his whores, Priscilla, Maximilla, and Quintilla, for prophecies. Indeed, divine revelation is the proper ground of faith. No wonder if heretics, that they may gain credit, and so seduce the people, lay claim to it.

8. The gloss of Scripture is very oftentimes put upon false opinions, by the assertors of them, to delude the people. In this, as St Jerome well observeth,‡ they trace the devil's footsteps, who quoted Scripture, thereby fondly imagining he might delude Christ himself. Thus, the Judaising false teachers in the apostle's time made use of the Old Testament Scripture, quoting Moses and the prophets; and Irenæus observeth§ of the heretics of those times, that they dealt by the sacred writings as a graver doth by the goodly image of a king, which, by altering the form, he turneth into the likeness of a dog or wolf, and then affirmeth it, *ἔναι τοῦ βασιλέως ἰκόντα τῆν καλῆν*, to be the lovely image of the king; they take the words of Scripture, and put upon them their own sense, and then say it is Scripture. It is so, indeed, materially, but not formally, as the metal is the king's, but the stamp is a wolf; so the words are Scripture, but the sense the heretic's.

9. To all these I may add, the name of a church is no small bait whereby heretics allure and catch the simple in their snares. Our Saviour, Mat. xxiv. 6,

tells us what their sayings should be, 'Lo, Here is Christ, and There is Christ,' in this conventicle, and that meeting, by which they withdraw many from the apostolical assemblies. In this respect, St Jude's character of them, ver. 19, is, that they did 'separate themselves,' to wit, from the apostles, and (which must needs follow) they no doubt assumed to themselves the title of the true church of Christ; and thus did the Novatians in St Cyprian's time, and the Donatists in St Augustine's time, fighting against the church under the name of the church.

By all this, we see how antichristian heretics abuse the best things to the worst designs: truth, liberty, tradition, miracles, holiness, reason, revelation, scripture, the church, are all of them of singular concernment and advantage to the orthodox Christian catholic religion; but yet even these are falsely pretended by heretics, and by the feigned semblance of these it is that they endeavour (and oftentimes with too much success) to seduce their auditors from the faith.

These seducers have been more or less in all ages, but, I think I may safely say, never more than in this; and, if you mark it, you shall find the old cheats still practised. The papists, on the one hand, pretend to the church, traditions, miracles, and a formal sanctity; the Socinians boast much of reason; the Antinomians, of liberty; the Anabaptists, Quakers, and such like, of enthusiasms, a light within, breathings, impulses, and discoveries of the Spirit. All sects have some mixtures of truth, and would father their errors upon the Scriptures.

And now being encompassed, as it were, with such subtle sophisters, crafty seducers, what need is there of a prudent vigilancy, lest we be ensnared by them, according to that excellent advice of St Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 17, 'Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.' 'Behold,' saith our blessed Saviour to his disciples, Mat. x. 12, 'I send you forth as sheep among wolves; be ye wise as serpents, and innocent as doves: wise as serpents to defend themselves, innocent as doves in not offending others, or (as Prosper, to our present purpose) innocent as doves in not circumventing any, and wise as serpents in not suffering themselves to be circumvented; and surely this serpentine wisdom is that which concerneth all Christians in some measure to attain; so much the rather, because these wolves, as our Saviour elsewhere speaketh, come in sheep's clothing; for this reason, saith Optatus,\* *ut prius ovis mordentem lupum sentiat quam presentiam venientem*, that they may seize upon the sheep before it can perceive them coming. He that walketh among snares had need be cautious; and no less reason have we to be circumspect, who are in the same danger which those Christians were in, of them that would seduce them. And so much shall suffice to have been spoken of the first general, namely, the mischievous design

\* Optat. contra Parm. lib. ii.

\* Tert. præscript. adv. hæc. lib. c. vi.

† Lib. contra Hæmo.

‡ Apolog. Hier. contra Lucif.

§ Iren. lib. i. c. i.



of the false teachers. I go on to a more brief despatch of the other, which is,

The pious care of true apostles, 'These things have I written to you concerning them.' For the full discussion whereof, I shall look upon the writing here mentioned in a double reference, namely, as it was a result of the Spirit's dictate, and as it was an argument of St John's care.

1. As a result of the Spirit's dictates, for St John and the other 'holy men of God spake and wrote as moved by the Holy Ghost;' and so we are here to take notice, that the divinely inspired writings are of excellent use against seducers. Indeed, as a straight line discovers what is crooked, and the clear light dispels darkness, so the word of God serveth to discover who are seducers, and to dissipate their cloudy errors. 'You err' (saith our blessed Saviour to the Sadducees, Mat. xxii. 29), 'not knowing the Scriptures;' tacitly teaching us that the Scriptures, well known, and rightly understood, are a guard against error. 'The whole Scripture,' saith St Paul, 2 Tim. ii. 15, 'is of divine inspiration, and is profitable, as for reproof of sin, so for the correction of error.'

Let it therefore be our business, especially in such erroneous times as these, to study the Scriptures, and not only to be well versed in the letter, but acquainted with the meaning of them, that, as our Saviour refelled the tempter, so we may be able to refute seducers with a *scriptum est*. No darts pierce so deep as those which are taken out of the Lord's armoury; no arrows hit the mark like those which are drawn out of God's quiver; nor is any sword so sharp as that of the Spirit; and therefore, as David hid God's word in his heart, Ps. exix. 9, that he might not fall into sin, so let us, that we may not run into error.

2. But that which would be chiefly taken notice of is, that his writing these things concerning seducers was an argument of his care that the people might not be deceived by them. It is that which we find to have been not only the care of this, but the other holy apostles. The greatest part of St Jude's epistle, and of St Peter's second epistle, is concerning these seducers; frequent *caveats* we meet with in St Paul's epistle to the same purpose. Witness his *βλέπετε* to the Colossians, Col. ii. 8, 'Beware lest any man spoil you;' nay, his threefold *βλέπετε* to the Philippian, Philip. iii. 2, 'Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision;' and, to name no more, his *παρκαλῶ* to the Romans, Rom. xvi. 17, beseeching that they would mark and avoid such. It were easy to let you see how the fathers of the church have in this particular traced the footsteps of the apostles. Ignatius bespeaketh the Christians of Antioch\* in words much like those of St Paul to the Philippian, *βλέπετε τοὺς κύναις*, &c.: beware of dogs, serpents, dragons, asps, basilisks, scorpions. St Cyrian, in his epistle† to all the people, is very urgent with his *Oro vos fratres*,

\* Ignat. ad. Antioch. Ep. i. 2.

† Cypr. Ep. 40.

and again with his *Admoneo pariter et consulo*, advising, admonishing, entreating that they would not believe the smooth words of false teachers, lest they did mistake darkness for light, night for day, and poison for a remedy. Irenæus, in his preface to his first book against heresy, saith this was the reason of his writing those books, that the wolves might not devour the sheep of Christ through his default; for the same cause were those things written by Epiphanius, Athanasius, St Augustine, and many others which are extant, concerning heresies.

Nor was it without a great deal of reason that those holy men were, and in particular here St John was, so careful to write concerning seducers, and that both *respectu populi*, in regard of the people, for the preservation of their safety, and *respectu sui*, in regard of himself, for the discharging of his own duty.

1. In respect of the people, St John well knew,

(1.) That all men are naturally prone to error, their understanding (as well as will) being corrupted; yea, that the best being but men, may, through want of judgment and partiality of affection, be led aside. The bad through wickedness, and the good through weakness, sometimes like sheep have gone astray.

(2.) That the errors to which these antichrists did endeavour to seduce them were in things fundamental; for so it appeareth by the charge he layeth against them, which is, that they 'denied the Father and the Son,' that they denied Jesus to be the Christ, a doctrine upon which the whole Christian religion is founded. St Jerome, upon that of our Saviour,\* 'Be wise as serpents,' observeth, *Serpentis astutia ponitur in exemplum, quia toto corpore occultat caput, ut illud in quo vita est protegat*, the serpent is therefore mentioned as an example of wisdom, because it is careful to hide the head, wherein its life lieth, with the whole body. Christ is the head of the church, and the errors of these seducers did strike at the head; no wonder if the apostle wrote concerning them.

(3.) That to be seduced, especially in such errors, is dangerous and destructive. It was the prophet Isaiah's sad complaint, chap. ix. 16, 'The leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.' And St Peter's epithet which he giveth to these heresies, 2 Peter ii. 1, is no less than *damnable*, or (according to the Greek phrase) *heresies of perdition*. To this purpose tends that phrase of St Paul, Col. ii. 8, when he calleth seducers *spoilers*, where the Greek word alludeth to thieves and robbers, or to soldiers and plunderers, who take the cattle of their enemy, and carry it away as a prey; † for such are false teachers, the devil's agents, to lead captive poor souls, that they may be the devil's prey. It is not unworthy our observation, that the apostle, having in the verse before mentioned the promise of eternal life, he presently addeth this *caveat* concerning

\* Jerome in Mat.

† Zauch. *ibid.*; Daven. *ibid.*

these seducers, intimating that the flatteries of these seducers, if hearkened to, would deprive them of the promise of eternal life, so that it was no less than their everlasting welfare which was endangered. Good reason had the apostle, upon all these considerations, to write concerning these seducers to the Christians in respect of their safety.

2. Besides this, there was an obligation in regard of himself, that he might perform his duty. So Lorinus glosseth upon the text,\* *Videtur fidem suam liberare, ac suo se functum munere protestari*, by this writing he dischargeth that office to which he was called, and that trust which was reposed in him by his Lord and Master. Indeed, if the minister of Christ warn the people of seducers, though they miscarry, yet he shall be acquitted; but *à pastore exigitur quicquid per inertiam non custoditur*, saith St Cyprian truly,† if the sheep wander through the negligence of the shepherd, it will be exacted of him, according to that of God himself: Ezek. iii. 17–19, ‘I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: and therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wickedness, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and if he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.’

To close up this with a threefold inference.

1. See hence what is the reason why Diotrephes prated against this apostle (as himself tells us, 3 John 10) with malicious words, and why it is that seducers (with their followers) rail at the ministers of the gospel, namely, because they preach and write concerning them. For this cause it is that in all ages they have been, and still are, so solicitous to stop the mouths and pens, to take away the livings and lives of the orthodox, as well knowing, that else

\* Lor. in loc.

† Cypr. de pastor. cur.

they cannot have the opportunity of sowing their tares, at leastwise not with so good success. It was no slight policy of Philip to offer the Athenians peace upon condition of delivering up their orators to him, whom Demosthenes answered with an apologue very suitable to this present matter. The wolves were willing to make an agreement with the sheep, provided they would deliver up their dogs. The truth is, seducing wolves are most afraid of, and angry at, the ministers of the gospel, whom that great Shepherd of our souls hath appointed to watch his flock.

2. Learn hence, how unlike those ministers are to this apostle, who are dumb dogs in the midst of ravening wolves, and thereby suffer the sheep of Christ to be worried. What a shame is it that the heterodox should be bold, and the orthodox cold; the seducers clamorous in conventicles, and the catholics silent in churches! Oh let all the ministers of the gospel learn their duty, especially in such times as these, which is not only *oves aggregare*, to gather together the sheep, but *lupos abigere*, to drive away the wolves! We must not only be as Mercuriuses to the traveller, which point out the right way, but as sea-marks to the mariner, which warn him of shelves, sands, and rocks. We are called in Scripture both guides and watchmen, to teach us, that as we ought to lead the people in the truth, so to give them notice of heretics. Nor can we be faithful and wise servants, unless we as well admonish the people of their danger, as instruct them in their duty.

3. Finally, let not the care of those ministers, who, after St John’s pattern, preach and write concerning seducers, be disregarded by, but let their *caveats* be acceptable to, the people. He will easily open his ears to seducers who shuts them against true teachers. ‘Obey them, therefore, that have the rule over you, and watch for your soul,’ Heb. xiii. 17. Be guided by their advice, so shall you not be led aside of heretics by their devices. But above all, seek after and pray for that unction which will arm you against error, whereof our apostle treats in the next verse, and shall (God willing) be discussed the next time.

## SERMON LVII.

*But the anointing which you have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.—1 JOHN II. 27.*

THE virulency of persecution, and the subtilty of seduction, are the devil’s two great engines, by which he hath still endeavoured to batter down the church of Christ. Sometimes he is a raging spirit in the hands of cruel tyrants to destroy, and sometimes a lying spirit in the mouths of false teachers to deceive, the orthodox professors of the Christian religion. By the latter of these it is that he hath done more

mischief than the former: for whereas in the one he acteth openly, as an enemy, in the other he worketh closely, as a seeming friend; and whereas the blood of martyrs (though against the will of their persecutors) hath been a means to propagate and increase, the poison of heretics hath too often prevailed to the infection and damage of the church. No wonder, then, if one of the designs of this holy apostle in this epistle



be to write to the Christians concerning seducers, and to mind them of the great goodness of God in providing an antidote against this poison, in those words, 'But the anointing which you have received of him abideth in you,' &c.

Having in the former discourse handled the caution, that which next occurreth to our discussion is the comfort, which is not only mentioned, but enlarged upon, in these words, 'But the anointing,' &c.

The right understanding of this whole verse depends upon the genuine notion of τὸ χρίσμα, *the anointing*, once and again here spoken of. In order to which it will be needful to inquire, to what this anointing alludeth? what it doth import? and wherein the analogy holdeth?

The Jesuits, in their comments, would have us believe that St John alludeth to the anointing which is used in their church at the sacrament of baptism, before, in the breast and between the shoulders, and after, on the top of the head. But though I cannot deny that the use of anointing in baptism is very ancient, as finding it mentioned not only by St Augustine, but St Cyprian and Tertullian,\* yet sure I am it is nowhere spoken of in the New Testament, as either instituted by Christ, or preached by the apostles; in which respect it cannot rationally be conceived that St John alludeth to it. Indeed, we find in St James an anointing of the sick with oil to be then practised, though (by the way) that of a far different nature from the popish extreme unction; for whereas the papists anoint the sick in order to their better passage out, the anointing then used was in order to their recovery, and longer continuance in this world. But as there is no reason to imagine that St John had any eye to St James his unction, so much less can he be supposed to allude to an unction which was not at all used in his time. If, therefore, you would know from what this phrase is borrowed, the answer is, that very probably the apostle had an eye to that unction which was in use under the law, the ingredient and composition whereof you have set down at large by Moses, Exod. xxx. 15, and so much the rather, because, as that is called the holy oil, so this anointing is said before to be from the Holy One.

2. The Socinians, inquiring into the meaning of this metaphor, understand by it the evangelical doctrine, construing τὸ χρίσμα, *the anointing*, in this, by ὃ ἠκούσατε, 'that which you have heard,' at the four-and-twentieth verse, and conceiving it to be called the unction, because that by that wonderful effusion of the Holy Ghost, the apostles were enabled to publish it, for which reason they suppose it is elsewhere called 'the Spirit,' and 'the ministration of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. 6-8. With this interpretation some of our late orthodox writers accord, though upon a far different reason. For whereas the Socinians, falsely

\* Cyp. Ep. 70. Tertul. de Res. carn. Aug. de Trinit. lib. xv. cap. xxiv.

denying any need of the Spirit's illumination to be conferred upon every Christian, but only of that revelation which was at first vouchsafed to the apostles, and by them to the world, endeavour to evade the argument which is brought against them, from this Scripture, by this exposition; the orthodox justly denying any new revelation, or extraordinary inspiration now to be expected, answer the argument which enthusiasts bring from this scripture, by this interpretation. For my own part, I am very unwilling (without great cause), to recede from the generally received exposition of any Scripture. And as to this particular text,

1. I find the anointing by the far greatest part both of ancient and modern, protestant and popish commentators,\* to be expounded the Holy Spirit; suitable to which it is, that the latter *anointing* is read *Spirit* in the Ethiopic version, 'his Spirit teacheth you of all things.'

2. There are several considerations which render the common exposition most rational, in as much as

(1.) Usually where the Scripture speaketh of anointing, it is meant of the Spirit, as appeareth in the former discourse upon the twentieth verse.†

(2.) It is not here said, 'the anointing which *we* (to wit, apostles) have received of him,' for then it might most probably have referred to the visible descension of the Holy Ghost upon them; nor yet is it said, 'the anointing which *you* have received of us,' for then it might justly have been construed as the same with ὃ ἠκούσατε, 'that which you have heard,' this evangelical doctrine which was delivered by the inspired apostles; but inasmuch as it is 'the anointing which *you* have received of him,' it is most rationally construed of that spiritual illumination which every Christian receiveth in some measure from Christ.

(3.) Add to this, that our apostle in this verse manifestly intends to mind the Christians what a singular help Christ had provided for them against seducers, whereby they might be enabled to 'continue in that which they had heard,' and therefore it cannot rationally be looked upon as one and the same with that which they had heard, but rather the enlightening grace of his Spirit is to be understood, than which there cannot be a stronger antidote against error.

Finally, as by this exposition this scripture becometh a sharp sword against the Socinians, so (as shall appear in the handling) it will not hereby become a buckler for the Anabaptists, and therefore I shall acquiesce, and adhere to it as most genuine.

3. As to the last inquiry, how fitly the Spirit of God is compared to, and resembled by, oil, and anointing, the answer hath been already returned in the discourse upon the former clause of the twentieth verse, whither I refer the reader; nor shall I add anything further,

\* Aug. in loc. Greg. Mor. 5, 19. Cal., Illyr., Lap., Lor., in loc.

† See the 49th Lect.

but only, that as the holy ointment was made of several spices mixed with oil, and whatsoever things or persons were anointed therewith, were legally sanctified by it; so we are here to understand by this anointing, not the illumination of the Spirit, which is oftentimes found alone, and is vouchsafed to the unregenerate, but that which is, as it were, made up of the several graces of the Spirit, whereby not only the mind is enlightened, but the whole man is sanctified.

Having given you this account of the anointing, which is, as it were, the hinge upon which the whole verse turneth, it now remaineth that I go on to consider what is here affirmed concerning this unction; and because I have already traced the metaphor of oil, and our apostle is pleased to insist upon another similitude of teaching, I shall follow that, and accordingly you may conceive the Spirit of God, who is the anointing, to be likewise here represented as a schoolmaster, whose excellency is set forth by four characters, namely, his residency, sufficiency, fidelity, and efficiency. His,

1. *Residency, permanent*, in those words, 'the anointing which you have received of him abideth in you.'

2. *Sufficiency, abundant*, in those words, 'and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things.'

3. *Fidelity, eminent*, in those words, 'and is truth, and is no lie.'

4. *Efficiency, evident*, in those words, 'and as it hath taught you, you shall abide in him.'

1. Begin we with the residency of this schoolmaster, as it is set forth in the beginning of the verse, 'The anointing which you have received of him abideth in you;' and here we have something supposed and something proposed; that which is supposed is his presence, 'the anointing which you have received of him;' that which is proposed is his residence, 'abideth in you.'

(1.) That which is here supposed concerning this unction, cometh first to be considered, and shall be despatched in three propositions.

[1.] That this anointing is not in us of ourselves, but received by us from another. It is St Paul's question, 1 Cor. iv. 7, and though it be occasioned by a discourse of those extraordinary gifts, yet it holds true in reference to all, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' The sins which we commit are our own, but the grace to subdue them is received; though we are sometimes seduced into error, yet we are apt to fall into them ourselves, but the unction which armeth us against those errors is received.

It is a meditation which should keep the best Christians lowly in their own eyes. Hast thou this anointing whilst others want it, or hast thou it in a greater measure than others? Be not proud, but humble, for though it be in thee subjectively, yet it is not from thee effectively, and therefore no just cause

of self-exaltation. It is St Paul's inference upon the fore-mentioned question, 'If thou doest receive it, why doest thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' Where the manner of proposal by way of question intimateth (as Musculus well glosseth \*) the impudence of this arrogance. *Ridiculum planè est de alienis bonis superbire*, it is a ridiculous thing, with Æsop's crow, to be proud of borrowed feathers. In one word, as to boast ourselves of what we have not is abominable, so it is little less odious to boast of what we have, as if it were our own, whenas it is only received.

[2.] That this anointing is received of him, that is, Christ. It was at first received by Christ himself, to wit, as man in his human nature, but he received it not so much for himself as us; *Voluit accipere, ut posset tribuere*, he would as man receive, that as mediator he might convey it to us. Indeed, 'it hath pleased the Father' (saith St Paul, Col. ii. 9), 'that in him should all fulness dwell,' to wit, as water in the fountain, light in the sun, wine in the grape, and oil in the olive; and accordingly saith St John, John i. 16, 'Of his fulness we all receive, and that grace for grace.' What the head is to the body, that is Christ to the church; and as the members receive sense and motion from the head, so doth the church this unction from Christ. Learn hence,

1. How greatly we are beholding to Christ, of whom it is that we receive whatsoever measure we have of this spiritual unction; the truth is, whatsoever spiritual benefit we receive, it is only in and through Christ. The remission of sins and adoption of sons, the justification of our persons and sanctification of our natures, the donation of his Spirit and acceptance of our services, the redemption of our bodies and salvation of our souls, are all received through Christ. So justly doth St Paul say, 'He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'

2. What need we have to be ingrafted into Christ, since, as we can receive nothing but of him, so neither can we unless we first receive him. 'To as many as received him' (saith the evangelist, John i. 11), 'to them he gave power to become the sons of God,' and to as many as receive him it is that he giveth his Spirit. No wonder that St Paul, praying for the Ephesians, that they might be 'strengthened with the Spirit of Christ,' prayeth also that 'he might dwell in their hearts by faith,' Eph. iii. 16, 17, since it is by our faith in Christ that we receive him, and consequently his Spirit, which is this anointing.

[3.] Lastly, this receiving of the unction from him is by way of gift. Indeed, receiving in its largest extent is the correlative both of *debitum* and *donum*, a debt and a gift, what is duly paid and what is freely given, both are said to be received. But when it is used in reference to God and Christ, it cannot relate but only to a gift, since whatever we receive of him, and much

\* Musc. in loc.



more the anointing of the Spirit, is given of his mere mercy. Indeed, in respect of himself, it may be called a debt, he having pleased by his promise to make himself a debtor, and accordingly it is that the Spirit is called the 'Spirit of promise,' Eph. i. 13, because promised both by the Father and the Son; for so we find the expression varied, John xvi. 25, 'The Comforter whom my Father will send,' and 'I will give you.' But still, in respect of us, it is a free gift, it was love moved him at first to promise this unction to, and since to confer it on, us; in which respect it is called 'the gift of the Holy Ghost,' Acts ii. 38. True it is this anointing was received by Christ from his Father, as purchased by his precious blood, but it is received by us from Christ, as bestowed by his free grace.

It is a consideration which should so much the more oblige us to thankfulness for this unction, it being but reason, that when we receive we should acknowledge the donor, and that what is received freely should be acknowledged the more gratefully. 'We have received the Spirit of God' (saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 12), 'that we may know the things which are freely given us of God,' among which the Spirit himself is not the least; and whose knoweth them to be freely given cannot but be greatly thankful. Holy Jesus, we could do nothing that is good, nor avoid what is evil, did we not receive this unction from thee; nor do we receive this unction as a reward of our merit, but a fruit of thy bounty. We are unworthy to receive the anointing from thee, but thou art worthy to receive from us glory, and honour, and praise, now and for ever.

(2.) That which is next in order to be discussed, and is more directly expressed, is the residency of this schoolmaster, the abiding of this unction. Things that are laid in oil are most lasting; this sacred anointing is permanent. It is that which is true in respect of the church in general, and each Christian in particular.

[1.] This anointing abideth in the church. That Holy Spirit who is here set forth under the notion of a teacher, is by our Saviour described as a comforter, John xiv. 16, concerning whom he tells his disciples that 'he shall abide with them for ever,' which promise was made to them as the then representatives of, and so in them to the whole church. Accordingly it is that the Spirit hath been resident in all ages with the Christian church, to teach and comfort, and perform all other offices whereof she stands in need. Christ's presence with his disciples was temporary; in which respect St John's word is, John i. 12, ἐσκήνωσε, 'he dwelt among us.' So our translation reads it; but as in a tabernacle, so much the force of the Greek carrieth in it, he only sojourned for a time with his disciples, but his Spirit, μένει, abides with his church from one generation to another, οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν προσωρινὸς αὐτοῦ παρουσία ὡς ἐμῆ, so Theophylact glos-

seth; \* for his presence is not as Christ's was, only for a season. True it is, Christ is said, Rev. i. 13, to be 'in the midst of the golden candlesticks,' but that is by his Spirit. In respect of his corporal presence, he saith in one place, Mat. xxvi. 11, 'the poor you have always with you, but me you have not always.' In regard of his spiritual presence it is that he saith in another place, Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.'

[2.] As this anointing which we receive from Christ abideth in the church, so doth it in all the chosen and faithful members of the church. It is said of the apostles, that when this unction visibly and gloriously descended on them, 'there appeared cloven tongues, as it were of fire, and sat upon each of them,' Acts ii. 8. Sitting is a fixed posture, and noteth permanency; it doth so in some, though not the same, measure and manner upon every true believer. At the eighth verse of the next chapter (where I shall, God willing, enlarge upon this subject), it is resembled to seed, and that such is not only cast into, but remaineth in, the ground. By our blessed Saviour it is compared to water, and that river water, which is continually running, and therefore said to be living, John vii. 37; and again it is said to be a well of water springing up in the heart of a believer to everlasting life. Finally, by John the Baptist it is likened to fire, Mat. iii. 11, and such a fire it is which, like that under the altar, never goeth out.

The consideration hereof may serve,

1. To rectify our judgments in the true estimate of, and accordingly to quicken our endeavours in the ardent pursuit after, this unction. Ah, Lord, how eager are men in scraping the things of this world, which, when with difficulty obtained by us, are easily snatched from us! how much rather should we seek after this anointing, which, being received, abideth in us! 'Labour not' (saith our blessed Saviour, John vi. 27) 'for the meat that perisheth, but labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life,' thereby plainly intimating that perpetuity is that which much advanceth excellency. Everything being so much the more amiable, by how much it is the more durable, no wise man but would prefer lasting brass before fading gold, a constant table, though of a few dishes, before the largest feast, which should only last for a few days. And surely then, when we consider how much this and all other spiritual blessings transcend corporal, both in their nature and duration, we cannot but judge them worthy our highest esteem, and choicest endeavour. 'A good name' (saith the wise man, Eccles. vii. 1) 'is better than precious ointment;' but this precious ointment is better than a good name, and much more than wealth and pleasure, or whatever it is that this world can afford. This is one of those gifts to which St James giveth those epithets of *good* and *perfect*. Every gift is good, though but temporal;

\* Theoph. in John.

but spiritual gifts, being of a never fading duration, are both good and perfect. Great reason have we to beg these above all others. Oh let us not cease in asking, seeking, knocking, for this unction, which, being given to us (like Mary's good part, Luke x. 32), 'shall never be taken from us.'

2. To comfort those who have received this unction, when they consider its perpetual duration. *Habet oleum Deus, habet et mundus*, saith Hugo,\* God hath his oil, and the world too; *oleum mundi in vasis deficit, oleo Dei vasa deficiunt*, the world's oil faileth in the vessels, but the vessels fail for God's oil; the one, *nunquam sufficit*, will never satisfy, the other, *nunquam deficit*, will never waste. Whatever worldly comforts we receive, our fear of losing allayeth the sweetness of enjoying; but it is not so with the grace of the Spirit, which, being received, abideth with us; though, withal, a caution must be annexed, that we use our endeavour to preserve and maintain this oil in the lamp of our souls. This schoolmaster is willing to reside with us, but then we must remember St Paul's caveat, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption,' Eph. iv. 30; for if we grieve him, he will, at least for a time, withdraw himself from us. This fire is of a lasting nature, being once thoroughly kindled. But then we must observe that other injunction of the apostle, 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Quench not the Spirit;' for though it be not wholly put out, it may be much quenched by our negligence. This anointing is abiding; but then we must take notice of our Saviour's assertion: Mat. xxv. 39, 'To him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath.' We must make use of and improve this holy oil, concerning which that riddle is a truth, the more we spend the more it increaseth. The oil in the widow's vessel ceased not, so long as she poured it out. This holy oil is best preserved by using it to the glory of God, our own and others' advantage. And thus much shall suffice for the first character of the residency of this schoolmaster; proceed we to the next, which is,

2. The sufficiency of his instruction, as it is set forth

Affirmatively, in those words, 'The same anointing teacheth you of all things.'

Negatively, in those, 'And you need not that any man teach you.'

1. Begin we with the affirmative part, and therein consider

The latitude of the object, *all things*, and

The quality of the act, *teacheth*.

1. The object is expressed in the same latitude at the twentieth verse, where hath been largely discussed how, and with what restrictions, it is to be interpreted. It was the promise of our Saviour to his disciples, that his Spirit 'should guide them into all truth,' John

\* Hug. Card.

xvi. 13. Nor was this confined to them, but is here assured to all Christians, that 'the anointing should teach them all things;' *all things*, that is, *all truth*, truth being the proper object of the understanding, which is that faculty whereby we are capable of teaching. Nor yet must this be extended as far as the Spirit is able to teach and lead, but only as far as was requisite for them, and is for us, to know and understand. Thus the Spirit led them into all truth, whereby they were able to propagate Christian religion in the world; and he teacheth every Christian all truth which is needful in order to the prevention of fundamental errors, and the salvation of his precious soul. It would not be passed by, that our apostle's phrase is at once both extensive and restrictive; it is not *διδάσκει πάντα*, but *περὶ πάντων*, he teacheth *all things*, but *of or concerning* all things, that is, something of all things. These all things are not taught simultaneously, but successively; fully, but gradually. The disciples themselves were taught by degrees, and did not know all things at first; nay, indeed, not exactly at the last. It is but a partial knowledge the best have of these all things; but yet all those things which conduce to the strengthening us against error, and the guiding us in the way of truth, are in some, though not the same measure, taught by this unction.

2. The chief thing here to be discussed is the quality of the act; what kind of teaching it is that is here attributed to the Spirit, whereof all Christians participate.

For the better understanding hereof, take notice of a double distinction.

1. The teaching of this unction is either extraordinary or ordinary, that peculiar to some, this common to all Christians. In reference to the extraordinary teaching it is that St Gregory saith excellently, *Ungit Spiritus iste sanctus Citharedum, et psalmistam facit, ungit pastorem, et prophetam facit, ungit piscatorem, et predicatorem facit, ungit persecutorem, et doctorem gentium facit, ungit publicanum, et facit evangelistam*: the anointing of this Holy Spirit maketh an harper (so was David) a psalmist; a shepherd (so was Amos) a prophet; a fisherman (so was St Peter) a fisher of men by preaching; a publican (so was St Matthew) an evangelist; finally, a persecutor (so was St Paul) a teacher of the Gentiles. But it is the ordinary, not that peculiar and extraordinary, way of teaching, which is here intended.

2. The ordinary teaching of the Spirit is either external or internal, and both these are no doubt included.

(1.) The outward teaching of the Spirit is by the ministry of the word, and preaching of the gospel, which is contained in the holy Scriptures. Look as the holy writings were at first inspired by the Holy Ghost, so by them he still teacheth his church. Accordingly it is that all saving truths were dictated by the Spirit to the penmen, and are fully, faithfully de-



lineated in sacred writ. It is a 'form of sound words' every way complete, explicating (as Gregory the Great saith) all the divine mysteries of religion, and delivering all precepts for moral practice. *Quibus quidem duabus partibus omnis nostra salutis et felicitatis ratio continetur*, in which two consists the whole doctrine of attaining true happiness; and therefore in this respect this of the apostle is verified, the anointing teacheth us of all things, to wit, in the external ministration of the word.

(2.) Besides this outward, there is an inward teaching, which the Spirit vouchsafeth to the church, and every true member of it, and is here principally aimed at. This is that teaching which, being the secret work of God's Spirit, is not so visibly discernible. The more things are abstracted from sense, the more mysterious they are. No wonder if it be difficult to apprehend what this teaching is, which, according to St Gregory, is *allocutio intima inspirationis*, an inward inspiration, or spiritual allocution. It is a question much controverted in the schools, how the angels, being spiritual substances, impart their conceptions to one another; and surely it is much more hard to know how the Spirit imparts his divine learning to the soul; even they who are thus taught are sure of the *ὅτι*, that *so it is*, but are not able to unfold the *πῶς*, how it is so.

And yet, that we may in some measure apprehend what we cannot fully conceive, I shall in a few words acquaint you with that notion of this teaching which the Scripture is pleased to give us. And accordingly, if you ask what this inward teaching is whereof the apostle speaketh, I shall return the answer in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. 33, or rather God by the prophet: It is the 'putting his law in our inward parts, and writing it in our hearts.' Indeed, as we say in general, the Scripture is the best interpreter of itself, so in this particular, the prophet is the best commentator on the apostle; and therefore, that we may more clearly understand the one, it will be needful more particularly to comment on the other, and let you see what this putting this law in our inward parts, and writing it in our hearts, meaneth, by which we shall the better perceive what this teaching is; in reference to which I shall lay down a double conclusion.

1. That which the Spirit teacheth inwardly is the same with that he teacheth outwardly, and therefore that which he is said to write in the heart of man is no other than that law which is written in the book of God. As the mind of the Spirit in one parcel agreeth with the mind of the Spirit in another parcel of holy writ, so the impressions of the Spirit on the soul answer to the dictates of the Spirit in the Scriptures. It is very observable that Christ tells his disciples, John xiv. 26, the Spirit should 'bring all things to their remembrance,' as if the chief end of the miraculous descension of the Holy Ghost upon them were

not to teach them any new doctrine, but to bring to remembrance what Christ had before taught them. Surely, then, the inward teaching of this unction, whereof all Christians participate, doth not reveal any new mysteries, which are not already delivered in the word. Among other resemblances, the Spirit's working upon the soul is said to be a *sealing*, and among other reasons for this, because as the seal maketh no stamp upon the wax but what is answerable to that which is upon the seal, so whatsoever the Spirit teacheth the heart is answerable to what it teacheth in the word.

2. The inward teaching or writing of the Spirit is the imprinting of Scripture truths upon the soul. Conceive, then, the soul as the paper, the truths revealed in God's word as the letters, the Spirit of God as the scribe, and the oil of his grace as the ink, by which there is an impression made of the letters upon the paper, truths upon the soul. For the more particular opening hereof know,

1. That this teaching is not a naked motion, but a real impression; not a superficial wetting, but a deep soaking. Many there are to whom the Spirit vouchsafeth some taste, yet never drink a full draught, who have some gliding aspects, but no direct beams of the Sun of righteousness shining on them. It is one thing to hear the voice of the Spirit speaking, another to find the pen of the Spirit writing. That teaching which is here meant is such as confirmeth against error, and therefore doth not glide off like water, but abide like oil, slightly move, but strongly work upon the soul.

2. That this impression of the Spirit's teaching is upon the whole soul, more especially the two chief faculties of the soul, the understanding and the will. So much seemeth to be intimated by that double character of the subject (the 'inward parts' and 'the heart') which we find in the prophet. As of old the law was literally written by God's finger in two tables of stone, so it is spiritually written by God's Spirit in two tables of flesh, the mind and the heart. This anointing then teacheth,

1. *Illuminando intellectum*, by enlightening the understanding, to see and discover those things which are revealed in the word. The first work of the Spirit in conversion answereth that first word and work of God in the creation, Gen. i. 3, 'Let there be light.' By this light it is that the darkness of ignorance is expelled, and the eyes of the mind are opened to apprehend divine writings in their own lustre and beauty. It is observed of paper, that being oiled it is thereby made bright, and so fitter to receive the beams of the sun, and convey the light into the room; so is it with our minds, which, being anointed with this oil, are thereby fitted to receive that heavenly light of evangelical doctrine; and whereas the oil which is put to the lamp feeds it when it is kindled, but cannot give light to it, such is the excellency of this unction, that it giveth the light of saving knowledge to them

who are altogether destitute of it. Nor is this all, but further,

2. *Inclinando voluntatem*, by inclining the will to embrace the goodness, and taste the sweetness, of those truths which are understood. This oil doth not only cherish the light of the lamp, but softens the hardness of the tumor, remove the darkness of the understanding, but mollify the perverseness of the will. As for the manner of the Spirit's operation upon the will, it is not to be disputed; many controversies which trouble the church would easily be reconciled were the *modus* laid aside. I suppose none will deny but he who made the will knoweth how to persuade it without co-action and incline it without compulsion, and therefore we need not fear to affirm that the anointing teacheth by inclining the will. The truth is, were it not that this teaching had an influence upon the will as well as the understanding, it could not guard against error and preserve from apostasy, nothing being more usual than for those who are taught outwardly, and not inwardly, to reject those truths whereof they have been fully convinced, for want of a kindly influence upon the will, by which they should constantly adhere.

To sum up this point, and therewith this discourse. See the excellency of the Spirit's teaching beyond all others. Other schoolmasters set only truths before us,

but cannot put them into us; they present them to our eyes or ears, but cannot write them upon our hearts; only this schoolmaster can and doth, not only by his word speak to our ears, but by his grace to our souls. Oh, therefore, let us implore this sacred unction, that he would vouchsafe to become our teacher; let us beg of him that he would first give us flexible spirits and docible minds, whereby we may be willing to be taught, which is to 'take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh;' and then that he would make us to know and embrace divine truths, which is to 'write his law in our hearts.' And withal, take we heed how we grieve this schoolmaster by a careless neglect of his instructions. If at any time he be pleased to put any good motions into our minds, let us cherish them, and let us beseech him that to those motions he would add his powerful impressions. And if we be thus taught of him, we are well taught; so well that we need no other teacher; which leads me to the other branch of the sufficiency of his instruction, in the negative expression, 'You need not that any man teach you.' But the time being expired, denieth any further progress at present, and therefore the discussion of that, with the other parts of the verse, must be referred to the next opportunity.

## SERMON LVIII.

*But the anointing which you have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*—1 JOHN II. 27.

THIS whole world may not unfitly be resembled to a book, whereof the cover is the heavens, whose gilded embossments are the glittering stars, letters are the elements, words are the several creatures compounded of those elements, sentences are the motions and actions of those creatures, and periods are its various ages. This is the book which almighty God hath given all mankind to read; and there is in every man a natural reason which serveth as a candle, whereby we discern the characters engraven on it, and as a schoolmaster, whereby we are instructed in the lessons to be learned from it. But besides this school of the world, in which the Creator hath appointed to train up all men, there is another school of the church, which our Redeemer hath designed for the education of Christians; in which respect one of the names by which they are frequently called is *μθητάι*, the disciples or scholars of Christ. The book wherein they are to learn is no other than the holy Scriptures of the Old and (more especially) of the New Testament. The ushers or inferior teachers are the ministers, whose lips are therefore said to preserve knowledge, and at whose mouth we must seek the law. And if you would know who is the head master in this school, let St

John give you the answer in the words of the text; it is no other than the Holy Spirit of God, here called the anointing: 'But the anointing which you have received of him,' &c.

The sufficiency of this unction in teaching Christians is that part of the text I am now in handling; and having discussed the affirmative assertion, in that it is said to teach all things, I am now in order to proceed to the

Negative amplification, which is expressed in those words, 'and you need not that any man teach you.'

The apostle Peter, speaking of the unlearned and unstable, telleth us that they did wrest, as many things in St Paul's epistles, so likewise in other scriptures, to their own perdition, 2 Pet. iii. 6. Where the Greek word *στρεβλοῦσαν*, as Gerard well observes,\* is a metaphor borrowed from those who put men upon the rack, whereby they oftentimes force them to speak things against their knowledge and conscience; for so do heretics impose upon the Scripture a senso contrary to what the Spirit of God intended.

An instance hereof we have in this text, particularly in this clause, which (together with those parallel

\* Gerard *ibid*.



words of the prophet Jeremiah, chap xxxi. 34, quoted by the apostle Paul, Heb. viii. 11, 'They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord,') is wrested by the quakers and such like sectaries among us, as it was by the enthusiasts heretofore, to the undervaluing of the ministry, as needless in the church, yea, of the holy Scriptures themselves; whilst pretending to a light within them, which is communicated by this unction, they think they need no light without them, no, not that which shineth from the sacred writings. For the proof whereof they thus argue from this text.

All who are taught by the unction, need not that any man should teach them, and consequently not the holy men of God;

But all Christians are taught by the unction which they receive from Christ; therefore, &c.

That this syllogism, how rational soever it may seem, is but a paralogism, and particularly, that sophism which is called by logicians, *Fallacia à dicto secundum quid, ad dictum simpliciter*, a fallacy arguing from that which is spoken only as to some respect, as if it were to be construed in its utmost latitude, will plainly appear in the following discourse. And that I may at once both repel this argument and unfold the clause, I shall first demonstrate that those words, 'You need not that any man teach you,' cannot with any show of reason, nor yet without apparent contradiction, be intended by St John as an absolute negation; and then I shall acquaint you with those constructions which are probable, and which of them I conceive most natural.

I. In pursuance of the negative part of the explication, I shall premise something by way of prevention, and then propose somewhat by way of confutation.

1. By way of prevention, take notice of these particulars, which cannot but be granted.

(1.) Without doubt there will be a time when God's anointed ones shall not need the teaching of any man, and that is in the other life, when glorified saints shall behold, in the vision of God's face, all things which may conduce to their happiness. It is a true rule in divinity, *Promissiones novi fœderis inchoantur in hac vitâ, implentur in futurâ*,\* evangelical promises have some impletion in this life, but their completion in the other. Accordingly it is that those words, 'they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,' are by some of the fathers† understood of that knowledge which we shall have in the country; and though I look not upon this as the genuine scope of these words, yet doubtless then, and then only, it is that those words shall most exactly be fulfilled. To the two states of this, and that other life, no doubt St Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, referreth under the resemblance

\* Camer. Myroth.

† Aug. l. de Sp. et lit. c. 14. Anselm. in Heb.

of a child, speaking, doing, and understanding as a child, and of a man's putting away childish things, intending not different degrees of grace, but the difference between grace here and glory hereafter. We are not such grown men whilst on earth, that we should look upon the external means of grace as childish things to be put away; it is the sole privilege of heaven (where we shall know as we are known), that there all helps of human instruction shall be superfluous. Indeed, as Aquinas excellently argueth,\* it is a sign of perfect knowledge when one needeth not to be taught, because learning is the way to the attainment of knowledge, *Et ideo cessat doctrina, acquisitâ perfectè scientiâ*; and therefore in that perfect state of knowledge, no wonder if all teaching cease.

(2.) In respect of our present state in this life, know further, that

[1.] On the one hand, it is an undoubted truth, that notwithstanding we are taught by men, there is great need of the teaching of this unction; so great, that without it all other teaching is in vain. Every instructor saith to his auditors, in words much like those of the king to the woman, 2 Kings vi. 27, 'How can I help, except God help?' how can I teach, except the Spirit teach? St Gregory upon those words of our Saviour,† concerning the Spirit, 'He shall lead you into all truth,' John xiv. 26, enlargeth very excellently to this purpose: Unless that divine Spirit be present to the heart of the hearer, the word of the teacher is to no purpose; let therefore no man attribute it to the man who teacheth that he understandeth what he saith, because *nisi intus sit qui doceat, doctoris lingua exterius in vacuum laborat*: except there be a teacher within, the preacher's tongue laboreth outwardly in vain. Behold (saith that father), you all alike hear the same voice of him that speaketh, and yet you do not alike perceive the sense of what is spoken; *cum ergo vox dispar non sit, cur in cordibus vestris dispar est vocis intelligentia?* seeing therefore the same voice sounds in all your ears, why is there not the same reception into all your hearts, were it not that there is a master within, who is pleased peculiarly to teach some the understanding of what is generally spoken to all? Whereupon he quoteth this very text with this gloss, *per vocem non instruitur, quando mens per Spiritum non ungitur*: when the mind is not anointed by the Spirit, it is not instructed by the voice. To the same purpose, and no less full, is that discourse of St Austin‡ upon this place: Behold, my brethren, a great mystery; the sound of our words beateth the ear; the master is within. Do not think that any man learneth anything from any man; we may admonish by the noise of our voice, but in vain, if the Spirit teach not inwardly. You all now hear my sermon, and yet, alas, how many go away untaught! *Quantum ad me pertinet, omnibus locutus*

\* Aquin Par 12 q. 106, art. 1.

† Aug. in loc.

‡ Gr. M. in Evan. tom. 30.

*sum, sed quibus unctio illa intus non loquitur, quos Spiritus sanctus intus non docet, indocti redeunt*: so far as concerneth me, I have done my part in preaching to all; but to whom the unction doth not speak, whom the Spirit doth not teach, they go home untaught. The instructions and admonitions of men are extrinsecal helps. *Cathedram in celo habet qui docet cor*, his chair is in heaven who teacheth the heart; therefore he himself saith in the Gospel, Mat. xxiii. 10, 'Call no man your master on earth; one is your master, Christ.' And a little after, The words which we speak outwardly are to you as the husbandman to the tree, who planteth, and watereth, and pruneth it; but doth he form the fruit, or cover the tree with leaves? Who doth that? Hear that husbandman St Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 6, and see what we are, and hear who is the internal Master: 'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase; neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth anything; but he that giveth the increase is God,' that is, his unction teacheth you of all things. Thus, as the prophet's staff could not revive the child, but the prophet must come himself, so man's teaching cannot instruct, but this unction must teach us; and therefore, whensoever we come to hear the word, let us withal pray for the Spirit, that the ministration of the one may be accompanied with the operation of the other; that of Ferus being most true,\* *Docet Spiritus sanctus, sed per verbum; docent apostoli, sed per cooperationem Spiritus sancti*: the Spirit teacheth, but by the word, and the apostles taught not but by the co-working of the blessed Spirit.

[2.] On the other hand, it cannot be denied but that as man's teaching is nothing without this unction, so this unction can, nay, hath taught without the help of man. There is no question but that he who at first created man after his own image, could have repaired the decays of that image in man without the ministry of man. Human teaching is not a necessary, but arbitrary, instrument of the Spirit, not without which he *cannot*, but ordinarily he *will not* teach us. This unction needs not the teaching of any man to join with it. Those first planters of the gospel were immediately taught by this unction; and had it so pleased God, all Christians might still have been taught by an inward inspiration, without any outward instruction. Look as in governing the world, God vouchsafed to make use of second causes, but not out of any necessity, as if he could not govern without them; so in teaching the church, the Spirit of God maketh use of men as his ministers, but not as if he could not teach without them.

2. These things being premised, that which I shall, by way of confutation, assert and prove, is that this unction doth not, will not, ordinarily teach Christians, so as that whilst they are in this world they shall not need the help of man's teaching. Though man's teaching is ineffectual without the presence of the

\* Fer. in loc.

unction, yet the unction doth not exclude the presence of man's teaching.

For the clearing whereof, in few words, you must know,

I. In general.

1. That our Lord Christ hath instituted a certain order of men in the church, whose office it is to teach and instruct men in the faith. This is plainly implied in that commission given by Christ to his apostles, of discipling all nations, by baptizing and teaching them, to which is annexed a promise of being with them always, even to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20; both which considered together inform us that that commission was not to expire with the apostles, but that they should have successors in those sacred offices to the end of the world, with whom Christ would be present by his Spirit. Congruous hereunto it is, that St Paul expressly saith, Rom. x. 16, 'Faith cometh by hearing of the word of God,' and that from a preacher who is sent for that end. But most apposite and clear is that of the same apostle to the Ephesians, where he saith, chap. iv. 11, Christ 'gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,' which surely he would not have given had there been no need of them. Very observable to this purpose it is, that at the conversion of Cornelius, Acts x. 5, 6, in the vision which he had, he was directed to 'send for Peter,' that he might 'tell him what he ought to do;' and whereas the Spirit might himself have opened Isaiah's prophecy to the eunuch, he giveth Philip command to go and interpret it, Acts viii. 19, and preach Jesus to him. Yea, though Christ himself converted Saul by an immediate appearing, yet he sent Ananias to the finishing of the work, Acts ix. 10; and surely if to extraordinary, much more to ordinary conversion, the teaching of man, of those men whom Christ hath for that end appointed in his church, is necessary.

2. That the pastors and doctors of the church are not only designed for initiating, but the perfecting of the saints;—they are St Paul's own words in the fore-mentioned place. For this cause it is that they are resembled, not only to fathers who beget, and mothers who bring forth, but nurses who bring up the children; not only to planters, but to waterers, till the tree come to its full growth. And they are as so many builders, not only to lay the foundation, but to rear up the fabric of grace and knowledge in the hearts of Christians. Surely then, 'till we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,' which shall not be till we come to heaven, we have need that man should teach us.

II. In particular, as to this scripture, it cannot be St John's intention by these words, how express soever they may seem, to exclude man's teaching. Excellently St Austin to this purpose,\* If this be true, you need not that any man teach you; why do we teach you?

\* Aug. in loc.



If that anointing teach you all things, we labour as it were without cause. Why do we not leave you to that unction, that it may teach you? But now I put the question to myself, *Et illi ipsi apostolo facio*; I may put it to the apostle himself, Let the holy apostle vouchsafe to hear a little one inquiring of him. They to whom thou writest had this unction, thou hast said it: The unction which you have received teacheth you of all things. *Ut quid talem epistolam fecisti? quid illos tu docebas? quid instruebas? quid edificabas?* why hast thou written this epistle to them? why dost thou instruct and edify them? Indeed, it cannot be imagined that St John should teach them by writing to them, if he did intend by these words to assert all man's teaching useless.

And, therefore, *Carcamus tales tentationes superbissimas*, take we heed of spiritual pride in fancying to ourselves such a measure of the Spirit's unction, that we need not the minister's instruction.\* Our blessed Lord himself, who had the Spirit above measure, was very lowly, and bids us to learn this virtue of him. Surely, then, the greater measure we have of this unction, we should be so much the less conceited of ourselves. The good Spirit doth *afflare*, breathe grace into us, but it is the evil spirit which doth *inflare*, puff men up with the wind of pride. It is the poison of the serpent swells us, not the oil of the Spirit of God; and truly, there cannot be an higher degree of pride than to undervalue the means of instruction. He who is thus arrogant argueth himself greatly ignorant of the delusions of Satan, and the deceitfulness of his own heart. It is very observable how St Paul joineth those two *carcats* together, 1 Thes. v. 20, 21, 'Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesying,' the latter being the ready way to the former. If thou hast received this unction, it is, as that apostle tells the Galatians, chap. iii. 2, 'by the hearing of faith;' and by the same means it abideth *with*, and is increased *in* that it was first conveyed to us. The plain truth is, he that is above ordinances is below grace. Nor can there be a worse fool than he who thinketh himself so wise as not to need the minister's teaching. Nor would it be passed by, that those very sectaries who deny the ministry and Scriptures, do yet teach one another, all the rest attending, whilst any one of them who pretends to a revelation speaketh; and therefore I shall not need to spend time in confuting them, who by their own practice confute themselves.

2. Having in some measure cleared the *quid non*, what is *not*, cannot be the meaning of this clause, it now remaineth that I endeavour to unfold the *quid est*, what is the genuine sense of it; and since, by what hath been already said, it appeareth that it must be interpreted *κατὰ τὴν*, with limitation, that which is to be inquired and resolved is, in what respects this is

true, that he who is taught by the unction need not to be taught by any man.

For the unfolding whereof there is a double way proposed, both of which are very rational and satisfactory.

1. The particle of denying. *Not* is not to be taken absolutely, but comparatively; not that they did not need any man to teach them at all, but they did not need it so much as others.

For the further clearing of this, it would be observed that in several scriptures this particle *not* is a note, not of irrelative, but comparative, negation. When God saith by his prophet, Hosea vi. 6, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' he cannot mean that he would not have sacrifice at all, for then it was a part of his worship, but yet then he would not have it in comparison of mercy. When St Paul saith, 1 Cor. i. 17, 'I am sent not to baptize, but to preach,' he cannot mean a denial, for he was sent to baptize; his commission was the same with the rest of the apostles, which was to baptize all nations, but he was rather sent to preach than baptize. That of our blessed Saviour, John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth,' if taken negatively, will contradict St Paul, 2 Thes. iii. 10, where he saith 'He that will not work, let him not eat,' and therefore, no doubt, only meaneth that we should chiefly labour for the meat that endureth to eternal life. And yet once more, that saying of his in another place, John vii. 16, 'My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me,' should we take it as a direct denial, would be contradictory to itself, my doctrine, and yet not mine; and therefore is to be construed, it is not mine so much as his whose I am, and whose my doctrine is, his that sent me. Agreeable hereunto it is that we expound this of St John, *ὅς ἔχεται ἔχετε*, 'you have no need,' that is, not so much need that any man teach you.

According to this interpretation, it would further be inquired, in comparison of whom this negation is to be understood? To which a double answer may be returned.

(1.) In comparison of the Jews before the coming of Christ, it is true of all Christians, they need not so much as those Jews did, that any man should teach them. This is that which I look upon as the most genuine construction of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the church of the New Testament, for though the precepts are express in several epistles, of teaching and admonishing one another, Col. iii. 12, of exhorting one another, Heb. iii. 14, and of provoking one another to love and to good works, chap. x. 24, yet the Christians need not teach one another as the Jews of old needed. For whereas the worship of God under the law was so ceremonial and obscure that children needed to ask their parents, and every man his neighbour, what was the meaning of this or that rite, that so he might know the Lord, the precepts of the gospel are so plain and rational that every one

\* Dan. in loc.

may understand them; and whereas this unction was then but sparingly given, both in regard of latitude as to the subject and fulness as to the degree (some few extraordinary persons excepted), it is now so universally poured out, and that in so far a greater measure, that in respect of them the Christians now need not that any man teach them.

A consideration which should lay upon us Christians so much the greater obligation of gratitude. Time was when the Jews could say, 'He hath not dealt so with any nation as he hath done with us, neither have the heathen the knowledge of his law,' Ps. cxlvii. 20; but now we may say, he did not deal so with the Jews as he hath with us, neither had they either such clear prescripts for God's worship, or such a plentiful effusion of his Spirit. And oh that we would so thankfully consider this, as withal to remember that 'to whom much is given, of them much shall be required.'

(2.) More congruously to this present scripture, these Christians to whom St John wrote did not need that any man should teach them, in comparison of those who either were but newly initiated into, or had been seduced from, the doctrine of Christianity. To this purpose is that gloss of Beza's,\* *Has res non tanquam ignotas proponit, sed tanquam cognitās inculcat.* The ignorant must be taught what they knew not before, and the seduced must be taught to return from whence they have apostatised; but these Christians, being neither ignorant nor seduced, had no need to be so taught, though still, as to their confirmation and growth in grace, and the knowledge of Christ, they needed instruction. We may very well construe this οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε in opposition to that πάντων χρείαν ἔχετε of St Paul, Heb. v. 12. As he, chiding the Hebrews, saith, 'When for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God;' so our apostle, commending these Christians, saith, 'You need not that any man teach you.' So that, as Cameron well glosseth, it is *hyperbolica locutio*, an hyperbolical expression, in way of commendation, and so the design of it the same with that compliment he useth a little before, ver. 21, 'I have not written to you because you know not the truth, but because you know it.' Very observable to this purpose is that of the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. iv. 9, 10, where he saith, touching brotherly love, 'You have no need that I write unto you, for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another;' yet in the very next verse there followeth, 'We beseech you, brethren, to increase more and more.' By which it plainly appeareth he did not intend that there was no need at all to write to them, but that they did not need it so much as others, having in a good measure learned that lesson already. Suitable to this is that of the same apostle to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. ix. 1,

\* Beza. in loc.

where he saith, 'As touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you,' whereas in that very chapter he useth many arguments to encourage them to that very duty, and therefore cannot be supposed to mean that it was altogether superfluous. And surely as the design of St Paul in bespeaking the Thessalonians and the Corinthians after this manner was to stir them up to a ready performance of those duties, by taking notice of and commending them for what they had done in that kind already, so no doubt the scope of our apostle was to animate them against antichristian seducers, by praising them for their proficiency in the orthodox faith.

That which we may learn from hence is, that provided it be not out of flattery and for base ends, we may upon just occasion not only commend, but enlarge, and, as it were, hyperbolise in the commendations of them that are good. Indeed, to flourish with rhetorical exaggerations in laying open the faults of others (except of such crimes as are very open and heinous) is uncharitable; but to expatiate (though it be with hyperboles) in the praises of others for their virtues, is very allowable, as being that which this holy apostle giveth us a pattern of in this high encomium, 'You need not that any man teach you.'

2. There is yet another way of giving the sense of this clause, which to me seemeth most genuine, and that is, by construing those words, 'you need not that any man teach you,' with the following, 'but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things,' which, being put together, do only deny any need that any man should teach them any other doctrine than what this anointing had taught them. All things, to wit, necessary to salvation, this unction had taught them, and therefore no need of any man to teach them anything besides these all things. To this purpose\* is that gloss of Heinsius, who conceiveth that the conjunction *but* is to be here taken in the same notion in which it is used by the Chaldee and Syriac. Those words, 'there is no God besides me,' are read by the Chaldee, 'there is no God but I.' Thus in this place, ἀλλ' ὡς is as much as εἰ μὴ ὡς, 'you need not that any man teach you, but as,' that is, 'except those things which the same anointing teacheth you.' With this sense that gloss agreeth in effect which I find among some expositors, who refer the *man* here mentioned to the seducers before spoken of. There is no need of any new masters, that any of those seducers concerning whom the apostle had discoursed should teach them any new doctrine. Very apposite to this purpose is that excellent saying of Tertullian,† *Nobis curiositate opus non est post Jesum Christum, nec inquisitione post evangelium; nil desideramus ultra credere, hoc enim prius credimus, nil esse quod ultra credere debemus.* Christ being now revealed in his gospel, it is curiosity to make further inquiry; we desire not to believe any-

\* Heins., Lorin., Sorrae., Aret., in loc.

† Tertul. de præscript adv. hæc. 8.



thing more, for this we first believe, that there is nothing more to be believed. There is need, indeed, that the orthodox teachers should inculcate upon the people what this unction teacheth, but as for any doctrine besides, there is no need of, nor regard to be had to it, or him that bringeth it. It is very probable that those seducers did teach their new doctrines as things necessary to be known and believed, in reference to whom our apostle assureth them that whatever those heretics might pretend, they were already sufficiently instructed in all things needful for them to know. According to this notion, this very Scripture, which is made use of by enthusiasts as a buckler to defend, proveth a sword to cut asunder their opinion; for what other must their pretended revelations be but vain and foolish, if there be no need of anything to be taught us by any man but what this unction teacheth (to wit, as it hath been already explained) outwardly by the word, and inwardly by grace? The truth is, we need not that any man, no, nor yet any angel, should teach us; and if any angel from heaven should come and teach any other doctrine than what this unction hath already taught the holy apostles, and by them us, let him be accursed, Gal. i. 8. Nor is this more than what St Paul hath given us warrant for. And let this suffice to have been spoken of the sufficiency of this schoolmaster. Pass we on to the

3. Next character, which is his fidelity, as it is set down in those words, 'and is truth, and is no lie.' The first, which is the affirmative expression according to the Greek, is to be read in the concrete, and *is true*; and the latter, which is the negative, in the abstract, and *is no lie*. Our translators, finding the latter to be the abstract, read the former so too, though it may seem more rational to read the latter as if it were a concrete, finding the former to be so. But as to the rendering it, it is not much material, whilst the sense is the same; which is, that this anointing is true, without the mixture of any falsehood in his teaching. The more fully to express this, it is that our apostle speaketh the same thing twice, first by affirming, and then by denying the contrary; that look, as when in the former chapter he would set forth God's purity to the full, as being free from the least pollution, he saith, 'He is light, and in him is no darkness,' 1 John i. 5, so here, that he might express the veracity of the Spirit's dictates, as being without the least error, he saith, 'it is truth, and is no lie.' The devil's answers, which he gave those who consulted him, were so dubious that they could not tell which way to construe them, and so were deluded by them. But the Spirit's dictates are certain and infallible. The devil is a lying spirit, the father of lies, and his suggestions are lies, and no truth, but the Spirit of God is a Spirit of truth; so our Saviour calls him once and again, yea, he is truth, and no lie. True it is, heretics, the devil's instruments, do sometimes speak truth,\* but it

\* Iren. præfat. adv. hæc.

is in order to the advancing of some lie; yea, it is usually mixed with lies. But the Spirit's penmen deliver truth, and nothing but the truth, so that we may venture our souls upon their writings. Indeed, it is not so with us, who expound and preach upon their writings, since we have not so full a measure of this unction as they had. In which respect St Jerome saith,\* *Aliter habere apostolos, aliter reliquos tractatores, illos, semper vera dicere, istos, ut homines in quibusdam aberrare*, that there is a great deal of difference between the apostles and other preachers: those always write truth, but these err in many things; but withal, it is then when they are not led by the Spirit, who being wisdom cannot be deceived, and being truth cannot deceive. Keep we therefore close to the dictates of this unction, and that as they are set down in the word. Since they are truth, and no lie, let us believe and not doubt, trust and not waver; lest, if we receive not the truth in the love of it, God give us over to believe a lie, it being just that they who will not be taught by this unction, which is truth, and no lie, should be fooled by delusions, which are lies, and no truth.

4. There is only one clause of the verse to be despatched, in those words, 'and even as it hath taught you, you shall abide in him;' where the verb *abide*, according to the different Greek copies, is in the future tense of the indicative, and so rendered 'you shall abide,' and in the imperative mood, and rendered 'abide in him;' and accordingly it may be looked upon either as a promise or a precept. According to the former, it lets us see the efficiency of the schoolmaster; and according to the latter, the duty of the scholar. But because I find this given as a precept in the very next verse, I shall here only consider it as a promise, and so a further commendation of this unction.

Those words, *you shall abide*, are conceived by some to be only *verba sperantis*, words of one that hopeth well concerning them; but I rather take them to be a promise, assuring them of the virtue of this unction, which being received by, and abiding in them, would enable them to abide as it hath taught them. The pronoun *αυτω*, in the end of the verse, may be construed in a double reference, either to the *χριστια*, or to *χριστος*, to the thing, or the person, and so may be read, 'you shall abide in it,' that is, in the unction, or 'you shall abide in him,' that is, in Christ, from whom you received the unction. Indeed, in the next verse it is manifestly belonging to the person, the *αυτω* being no doubt the same with the *αυτης*, he that shall appear; but here it may very rationally be referred to both, and accordingly I shall speak a word of each.

1. 'Even as it hath taught you, you shall abide in him.' That which this unction chiefly teacheth, is to abide in Christ. Suitably the Arabic readeth it, as it hath taught you to abide in him; and in this sense it lets us see the excellency of the schoolmaster above

\* Hieron. ad Theo.

all others. They may teach what to do, but cannot enable to do what they teach; but this unction, as it hath taught you, so you shall do, it hath taught you to abide, and you shall abide in him. This voice saith behind us, 'This is the way, walk in it,' and it withal giveth us feet to walk in that way. Look, as when our blessed Saviour said to Lazarus, 'Come forth,' there was a power accompanying that voice which enabled him to come forth; so when this unction, as it were, saith to us, 'abide in him,' there is grace communicated strengthening us to abide in him. Very congruous to this purpose is that discourse of St Austin against Pelagius and Celestius,\* *Sic docet Deus eos qui secundum propositum vocati sunt, simul donans quid agant scire, et quod sciunt agere*: God so teacheth those who are called according to his purpose, that they both know what to do, and do what they know. Whence St Paul thus speaketh to the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. iv. 9, 10, 'You are taught of God to love one another;' and that he might prove they were taught of God, he presently addeth, 'for indeed you do it towards all the brethren:' *tanquam hoc sit certissimum signum quod à Deo didiceritis, si id quod didiceritis feceritis*, as if this were the most sure sign of being taught of God, to do what they were taught. After this manner were all the called according to purpose, as it is written in the prophets, taught of God; but he that knoweth what he ought to do, and doeth it not, hath not yet learned of God according to grace, but to the law; not according to the spirit, but the letter; and a little after he addeth, Of this manner of teaching our Lord saith, John vi. 4, 5, 'Whosoever hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me.' He therefore that doth not come to him, it is not truly said he hath heard and learned; for if, as he who is the truth saith, every one who hath learned cometh, he that cometh not hath not learned. So that, as he presently addeth, not only the power but the will is assisted by this teaching; for if it had been only an ability were conferred, our Lord would have said, every one that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, can or may come to me; but it is, he cometh. *Ubi jam et possibilitatis profectus, et voluntatis affectus, et actionis effectus est*, by which is intimated a collation of power, an affection of the will, and the effect of the action. Hitherto the words of St Austin, whose expressions both here and a little before in this discourse (as also St Gregory's), I have the more largely rehearsed, that the doctrine of the necessity and efficacy of the Spirit's grace may appear to be no new doctrine; nor shall I need to add much more in this particular.

\* Aug. lib. i. de grat. Christi contr. Pelag. cap. 13, 14.

Indeed, that prayer of the spouse would not be omitted: Cant. i. 9, 'Draw me, and we will run after thee;' whereby is intimated, that when the Spirit of Christ draweth, though it be not a forcible, yet it is an effectual operation, It is not such a drawing as maketh us go whether we will or no; but as maketh us of unwilling, willing, not only to go, but 'run the way of God's commandments.' Agreeable to which it is here not only said you *may*, but you 'shall abide in him.'

2. Nor would the other reading be left out, 'even as it hath taught you, you shall abide in it;' that is, in the doctrine which this unction hath taught you; whereby is intimated that the grace of this unction is not only illuminating but corroborating; and as it teacheth us, so it strengtheneth us to continue in what it teacheth. As oiled paper doth not only let in the light of the sun, but beat back the violence of the wind, so doth this unction not only enlighten its scholars, whereby they understand the truth, but also enable them to withstand the opposition of errors. This confirming energy of the Spirit, St Paul hath elegantly set forth by several metaphors, 2 Cor. ii. 21, 22, where he saith, 'He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointeth us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,' manifestly comparing the Spirit to an earnest, to a seal, to an ointment; and as the earnest assureth the bargain, the seal confirmeth the grant, and the ointment strengtheneth the part, so doth the Spirit stablish the heart in a firm expectation of divine promises, assurance of divine love, and a stedfast adherence to divine truth.

And now, putting all together, what great cause of gratulation and ground of consolation doth this verse afford us! We are infinitely beholding to our blessed Jesus, in that he shed his blood for us; and we are no less engaged to him for giving his Spirit to us, since as by the one he purchased salvation for us, so by the other it is he preserveth us to salvation. Had not this unction revealed the things we are to know in order to salvation, we must have continued ignorant; but blessed be God, this unction teacheth us of all things. Though we be instructed in the things of our peace, yet we are very apt to be withdrawn from them, especially by the cunning of seducers; but blessed be God, this unction abideth with us, and enableth us to abide. Oh let us herein rejoice, that the wisdom of our Saviour hath so fully provided for our safety; and let it be our daily prayer, that this holy unction would still vouchsafe to remain with us, so as we may be instructed, confirmed, and preserved by it to everlasting life. Amen.



## SERMON LIX.

*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*—1 JOHN II. 28.

**M**ANY are the diseases to which the inward as well as the outward man is subject. The fever of luxury, the surfeit of gluttony, meagrim of drunkenness, lethargy of sloth, and ague of idleness (all which are involved in the lust of the flesh); the itch of curiosity, and the dropsy of covetousness (which are the lusts of the eyes); the tumour of arrogancy, and the tympany of ambition (which are the pride of life), are not more common than dangerous sicknesses. No wonder if our apostle, being a spiritual physician, cautioneth us, and prescribeth in this chapter an excellent antidote against them, of not loving the world and the things of the world. But besides these, the consumption of envy, the frenzy of malice, the giddiness of inconstancy, and falling sickness of apostasy, are no less deadly, and far more spreading. For this cause it is that our apostle, throughout this whole epistle, very much insisteth upon brotherly love, the only cure of malice and envy; and in the latter part of this chapter earnestly persuadeth a firm adherence to the Christian faith, the proper remedy of inconstancy and apostasy, the close of which discourse is in the words of the text, 'And now, little children, abide in him,' &c.

In which verse there are three things offer themselves to our observation, the manner, the matter, the motive: the manner *sweet*, the matter *serious*, the motive *strong*; the manner *rhetorical*, the matter *theological*, the motive *logical*; the manner *vehement*, the matter *important*, the motive *urgent*. Finally,

The manner in the *compellation*, 'little children;'

The matter in the *exhortation*, 'And now, abide in him;'

The motive in the *incitation*, 'that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' Of each of which with brevity and perspicuity.

1. Begin we with the compellation, which, having had occasion once and again to handle, shall be quickly passed over, only I cannot but with Ferus\* take notice of the excellent artifice of our apostle, who calleth them to whom he wrote, 'little children,' *ut ostensione affectus sui fortius moveat*, that by discovering the dearness of his love towards them they might be the more easily persuaded by him. St Paul, writing to the Romans concerning false teachers, saith, Rom. xvi. 17, they did 'deceive the simple by fair and smooth words.' Surely the ministers of Christ should be no less artificial in persuading than they are in deceiving, and to that end use smooth and fair words. Methinketh those words of our Saviour to his disciples, when so many

\* Fer. in loc.

forsook him, John vi. 67, carry in them a great deal of passion, 'Will you also go away?' and no doubt they made a suitable impression on them. Witness Peter's answer, 'Lord, whither shall we go?' What affectionate strains are those of St Paul and St Peter! 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God,' so St Paul, Rom. xii. 1; 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you,' so St Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 10; and if we well weigh it, we shall find as much, nay more, in this of St John, 'And now, little children.' The Hebrew *וְעַתָּה*, which answers to the *νῦν* in the Greek, is not only an adverb of time, but a participle of beseeching; and this title, *little children*, seemeth to intimate that our apostle beseecheth them *per eam paternam benevolentiam*, by the love of a father, yea, by the bowels of a mother. You that are parents know with what tender affections you speak to your children, when you dissuade them from evil or persuade them to good:\* the same spirit was in this holy apostle. *Mira et sollicita de suorum salute cura*, it was a strange solicitous care and desire which he had of their salvation, which put him upon this earnest way of exhorting them to perseverance. Oh that all the ministers of the word would learn to follow this pattern! I told you in the last lecture, it is only God that can speak to the heart inwardly and effectually, but certainly that minister shall soonest convey as it were his words into the heart, who speaketh with his heart, yea, rather speaketh his heart, whose expressions manifest his affection, as to the things concerning which, so to the persons to whom he speaketh. And this shall suffice for a brief account of the compellation.

2. Proceed we to the exhortation, in those words, 'And now abide in him.'

Before I discuss the nature of the duty, it will not be amiss to observe, that what is assured in the end of the former verse, 'you shall abide in him,' is prescribed in the beginning of this, 'abide in him.' Abiding in Christ is the matter of both, a promise and a precept; it is that which we shall find verified in other duties as well as this. 'I will put my fear in their hearts,' so runs the promise, Jer. xxxii. 40; 'Fear the Lord,' so frequently the precept, Ps. xxxiv. 9, Prov. iii. 5; 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,' so God promiseth, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; 'Make you a new heart and a new spirit,' so he commandeth, Ezek. xviii. 31; 'The Lord thy God will circumsise thine heart to love him,' is the promise, Deut. xxx. 6; and in the same chapter, ver. 16, 'I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God.' Iudged, there may seem some kind of incongruity in

\* Est., Aret. in loc.

this at the first view, for what need is there of commanding us to do what God promiseth he will enable us to do? But in truth there is a sweet harmony between precepts and promises of this nature, whilst these serve to strengthen our confidence, and those to quicken our diligence. When, on the one hand, we are exhorted to abide in Christ, we may be ready to say, But how shall I be able to perform this duty? My enemies are so strong, and grace so weak, that I fear I shall let go my hold; and, as David once said, 'I shall one day fall by the hands of Saul,' so the weak though willing Christian is apt to say, I shall one day fall by the power and policy of the devil, and notwithstanding all my resolutions and endeavours, I fear my deceitful heart will be withdrawn from Christ. But lo, for our comfort and encouragement, here is a promise, that by the virtue of this unction we shall abide. On the other hand, when we meet with these and such like promises of perseverance, we may be ready to flatter ourselves, as if we cannot miscarry, and, once being in Christ, we shall abide, though we be never so careless and secure; and therefore, to prevent this supine laziness, here is a precept annexed to the promise, which minds us that something is to be performed on our part as well as God's. This unction enableth to abide in Christ, but withal we are required to make use of the grace which this unction giveth for that end; and as the promise assureth us of the one, so the precept puts us on the other. It is a known saying of St Austin, He that made us without ourselves will not save us without ourselves; we *can* do nothing without him, he *will* not do it without us. The unction teacheth, and that so as to give strength to fulfil, yet still our part is to put forth that strength for that end for which it was given us; and though it is the grace of this unction which doth not only prevent us by giving ability, but excite us to, and assist us in, actuating that ability, yet it is incumbent on us, by the help of preventing, exciting, and assisting grace, to exert those acts of faith, and courage, and constancy whereby we abide in him.

This being premised, come we now to consider the duty to which we are exhorted; and here we find something substantial and circumstantial: that in the verb *abide*, this in the adverb *now*.

1. The substance of the duty is in the word *abide*, a word which, as Lapide well observeth,\* our apostle very much delighted to use. No less than seven times we meet with it in this chapter. Nor is it any wonder, since it was his Master's word, and that in his last dying farewell sermon. If you cast your eyes on the 15th chapter of St John's Gospel, you shall find this phrase of abiding in him used by our Saviour five several times in four verses, chap. xv. 4-7; and, as hath been already observed, this holy apostle loved to tread in his Master's steps, yea, to speak in his Master's language. He that exhorts to walk as he walked

\* Verbo manendi gaudet apostolus.—Lap. in loc.

will not only do so, but talk also as he talked. No doubt, as he was his Lord's darling, so he had a dear affection to him; and those whom we love we would resemble, not only in greater but lesser matters, in garb and gesture, in discourse and language. And as for this reason he maketh so frequent use of the phrase, so likewise he so often inculcatheth the duty, because it was his Master's counsel to him and the rest of the disciples. He well knew he could not give better counsel to the people than Christ had given to him. He followed it himself, and found it good advice; no wonder if he commanded it to others, Abide in him.

For the unfolding of this duty, know,

1. There is a threefold abiding which is required of every Christian; in the church of Christ, in the doctrine of Christ, and in Christ himself. All of these we meet with in this chapter: the first in the 19th verse, *μεμενήκεισαν μεθ' ἡμῶν*, 'they had continued with us,' to wit, the apostles of Christ, who were then the rulers and representatives of the church; the second, in the four-and-twentieth verse, *ἐν ὑμῶν μενεῖτω*, 'Let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you,' to wit, the evangelical doctrine; and the last in this verse, *μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ*, 'abide in him.' By all of these, no doubt one and the same grace of perseverance is meant, yet not without some difference, one rising higher than the other. The lowest step is abiding in the church, which is opposed to a schismatical separation; higher than that is abiding in the doctrine, which is opposed to heretical defection; the highest is abiding in Christ himself, which is opposed to an hypocritical profession. A man may abide in the church, and yet fall from truth to error; he may abide both in the church and in the doctrine of Christ, so far as to outward profession, and yet not be really united to, and abide in, Christ himself. But, on the other hand, he who spiritually abideth in Christ cannot but abide in his doctrine and church. 'If you abide in me, and my words abide in you,' saith our blessed Saviour, John xv. 6, where the latter is joined with the former. Christ's words cannot but abide in them who abide in him, nor will he who hath a real union with Christ make a wilful separation from his church, since the members which adhere to the head cannot forsake the body. No wonder if our apostle add this to the two former, as that which will both engage and enable us to them; and accordingly, that we may continue with the orthodox Christians, and that which we have heard from the beginning may remain in us, let us abide in him.

2. In regard of this union and communion which we have with Christ, there is a threefold phrase, which we meet with very frequently in the New Testament: coming to him, being in him, and abiding in him. *Coming* to him is St Peter's phrase, 1 Peter ii. 5, 'to whom coming as to a living stone;' *being* in him, St Paul's, 2 Cor. v. 21, 'if any man be in Christ;' *abiding* in him, St John's, both here and before in this chapter, 1 John ii. 6. And here we



may observe a gradation; coming to him is the beginning, being in him the progress, and abiding in him the perfection, of Christianity. We must come to him, or we cannot be in him; we must be in him, else we cannot abide in him; it is not enough to come to, but we must be in; nor to be in, but we must abide in him. To come to Christ is renouncing ourselves, to embrace Christ as our Lord and Saviour; to be in him is to trust in him, whom we embrace, for salvation; and to abide in him is to persevere in this adhesion to the end.

3. If yet you desire a more plain account of the true meaning and full latitude of this phrase of abiding in Christ, I answer, It is whenas having received Christ Jesus our Lord, and that both as our Lord and Jesus, we do not, will not, suffer ourselves, either by the allurements or affrightments of the world, solicitations of the flesh and temptations of the devil, to be withdrawn from the profession of his name, observance of his precepts, recumbency on his merits, imitation of his graces, and communion with his person.

2. Having given you this account of the *μῆνεται ἐν αὐτῷ*, 'abide in him,' it will not be amiss to cast an eye upon the *καὶ νῦν*, 'and now.' Though it may be looked upon only as *formula concludendi*, a winding up of the discourse, as if he had said in Solomon's language, Eccles. xii. 13, 'This is the conclusion of the whole matter,' yet since the particle *νῦν* is properly an adverb of time, we shall so consider it, and find a great deal of emphasis in it, inasmuch as this *now* seemeth to have a double aspect:—

1. Upon the antichrists which then abounded; in which respect there was so much the more need at that time to take heed they were not withdrawn from Christ, and therefore saith the apostle, 'Now abide in him.' 'Here is the faith and patience of the saints,' saith St John of persecuting times, Rev. xiii. 10. Here is the faith and constancy of the saints, may we say of heretical times; then to abide in when many go from Christ, cannot but be very acceptable to him. For this he commended the angel of the church of Pergamos: Rev. ii. 19, 'I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.' It is a small matter to be faithful to Christ in those days and places where Christianity flourisheth, but the trial of our faithfulness is when we are in the midst of apostates and seducers. He is the loyal subject who is true to his prince in rebellious times, and he is the sound Christian who abideth in Christ in antichristian times. Where heresy and tyranny prevail, there is Satan's seat, or rather throne; and to adhere to Christ as our king where Satan hath his throne is constancy indeed. Surely what is said of Pergamos may too truly be affirmed of England at this day; it is the place where the devil playeth *Rex*, misleading by heretical seducers multitudes into damnable errors; and *now* (beloved) to abide in

Christ, and cleave to the truth, will be both his and our honour.

2. Upon the Christians who had already embraced, and hitherto adhered to him, whom therefore the apostle bespeaketh, 'now abide in him;' that is, still continue faithful and hold out to the end. He had told them before it is the last hour, and he would not have them fail at last. That coat which Joseph had from his father is called by St Gregory\* *talaris tunica*, a coat down to his heels; such must the coat of perseverance be, not to the knees or legs only, but to the very heels. He that begins a race, nay, that runs three parts of the way, will yet lose the prize if he give over before he come to the goal. As St James saith of patience, James i. 2, so say I of perseverance, 'Let it have its perfect work.' O my brethren, I fear it may be said to too many amongst us, in the language of St Paul to the Galatians, chap. iii. 10, 'Have you suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?' Have you so long, maugre all opposition, adhered to the truth, and will you now by a cowardly faintness lose the glory and reward of all your former services? Know you not that the *grace* of the theatre is the last scene? and it is the evening that crowneth the day. Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, but as you have hitherto, so now abide in him. And which would not be passed by, it was not long that this time of trial should last, it was but for an hour; and since they had been faithful so long, he would have them hold out a little longer. 'Could you not watch with me one hour?' said Christ to his disciples. Shall we not abide in Christ one hour? I have served my Jesus (said Polycarpus) these many years, shall I now desert him? It is but for a while, a very little while, as here in St John's phrase; a moment in St Paul's; and therefore 'now abide in him.' To bring this part of the text to a period,—

1. That we may be enabled constantly to abide in Christ, there is need especially of two graces, namely, a strong faith in, and an ardent love to, Christ. He that is fully assured that Christ, and Christ alone, is the root of all graces, the fountain of all happiness, the foundation of all good, and that, as St Peter expresseth, Acts iv. 13, 'there is no salvation in any other,' will certainly abide in Christ, whatever befall him. He that hath an endeared affection to Christ, whose soul cleaveth to him, as the soul of Jonathan did to David, will not leave him, nor suffer himself, either by fair or foul means, to be withdrawn from him. Where there is a voluntary separation between man and wife, we may safely conclude there is want of affection to each other in both or either, since love, being a desire of union, cannot admit of a disjunction; and therefore let our prayer and endeavour be, that our faith may be strengthened, our love inflamed, and thereby our perseverance lengthened.

\* Greg. in Gr.

2. Of how great concernment it is that we should abide in Christ, himself hath told us in that fore-mentioned place of the Gospel, where he fully sets before us the advantage on the one hand and the damage on the other. If we will abide in him, he will abide with us; if we abide in him, we shall abide in his love; if we abide in him, we shall be enabled to bring forth the fruit of good works to his Father's glory, and consequently our own felicity; but if we do not abide in him we shall be barren and unfruitful, cast out and withered, and our end at last will be to be burned, John xv. 2, 3.

But what need I go further than the text, wherein we meet with a very strong and pressing motive, which is the last part, and cometh now to be handled, as it is laid down in those words, 'that when he shall appear,' &c.

In which there is something

*Supposed*, namely, the coming and appearance of Christ, 'when he shall appear,' and again, 'at his coming.'

*Implied*, namely, our appearance at that day, in that it is said, 'before him.'

*Expressed*, namely, the confident appearing before Christ of those who abide in him, 'that we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.'

1. That which is here supposed by our apostle is, that there is another coming of Christ, when he shall appear. That the *he* here spoken of is Christ, is so evident that it needs no discussion; and that you may know of what coming and appearance St John speaketh, take notice of a threefold coming of Christ:

Virtual, spiritual, personal; of his power, of his Spirit, of his person.

1. Whosoever our blessed Lord is pleased to make known his power in the deliverance of his church, and vengeance on his enemies, he is then said to come and appear; and of this coming we find mention both in the Gospels and Epistles: many places there are which *may*, and some which *must* be so understood. Thus when Christ saith, Mat. xvi. 28, 'There are some here standing which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;' and again, concerning the beloved disciple, John xxi. 22, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' it cannot be rationally construed of any other than his coming to destroy the Jews that crucified him, and deliver the Christians that worshipped him.

2. Whosoever our blessed Jesus is pleased, by his Holy Spirit, to manifest himself to the soul of a believer, enlightening the mind, comforting the conscience, enlarging the affections, he is then said to come and appear. So runs the promise in the Gospel, John xvi. 23, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come in to him, and make our abode with him;' in the epistle to the angel of the Laodicean church, Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any

man open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.'

3. Besides both these, there is a personal coming of Christ; and this is double, for so we read, Heb. ix. 28, 'He shall appear the second time.' Indeed, the Jews fancy two Messiahs, one of the tribe of Ephraim, the other of the tribe of Judah; one the son of Joseph, the other of David. We nowhere read of any Messiah of any other tribe than that of Judah. But that which was the occasion of their error is a certain truth, namely, that there is a double coming of the Messiah. One of the titles of the Messiah is *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, he that is to come, and it is that which, as it did from the beginning, so it will till the end of the world, belong to him; for though the first coming be long since past, in respect of which this very apostle saith in the next chapter, 1 John iii. 5, 'the Son of God was manifested;' yet there is a coming to come, in reference to which he saith a little before in that chapter, 'he shall appear.' And indeed, though the late learned annotator refer the appearing in my text to that virtual coming of his when Jerusalem was overthrown, yet since there is no reason necessitating to restrain it to that, and so soon after (namely, in the second verse of the next chapter), this appearing is mentioned again, where it must be understood of that second and last coming, I conceive it most congruous, with the generality of interpreters, so to understand it here.

This is that coming of Christ which was prophesied long ago. 'Enoch, the seventh from Adam,' mentioned this advent, saying, 'The Lord cometh with thousands of his angels,' Jude 4; and Daniel, chap. vii. 13, 14, where he speaketh of 'the Son of man's coming with the clouds of heaven.' Of this coming the New Testament maketh frequent mention. It is foretold by Christ himself, John xiv. 3, 'I go, and prepare a place for you; I will come again.' By the angels, Acts i. 11, 'This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him gone into heaven.' By the apostles, 'The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God;' so St Paul, 1 Thess. iv. 6. 'Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord,' so St James, chap. i. 7; which, if immediately it respect the virtual, yet is to be extended to this personal, coming. Finally, 'There shall come in the last days scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?' so St Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. That he shall come again is an article of our creed, founded upon many pregnant testimonies of holy writ. To determine the time of his coming is without the compass of our knowledge, because not within the sphere of Scripture revelation. We have lived to see those men found liars who have audaciously presumed to set the time. Let us desire to know no more than God hath revealed, and that is, that it shall be the last day. At this coming, whosoever it is, he shall appear, to wit, in



splendour and glory; so it is called by St Paul, Tit. ii. 13, ἐπιφάνεια τῆς δόξης, 'the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' And herein lieth the difference between the first and second coming of Christ. *Primus adventus ejus occultus, secundus manifestus*, saith an ancient;\* his first coming was hidden, his second shall be manifest; *quum conspicuus factus erit*. So Beza readeth my text, when he shall appear conspicuously; his first coming was in the form of a servant, his second shall be in the splendour of a king; at his first coming he was meek as a lamb, at his second he shall be terrible as a lion; at his first coming he was accompanied with mean men, at his second he shall be attended with mighty angels; at his first coming he rode upon an ass, in his second he shall ride upon the clouds; finally, his first coming was in meanness and ignominy, his second shall be with might and majesty.

This coming, I trust, beloved, we all believe; and let us all be exhorted more and more to confirm our faith in it. Indeed, a sure belief of this second advent is of urgent necessity, in order to an holy life; since nothing maketh the servant more diligent in his business, than a certain expectation of his Lord's return. Hence it is, that one character of a true Christian in the New Testament is, to look for Christ's appearing, Heb. ix. 27, which implieth a stedfast confidence that he will appear, Philip. iii. 21. It is not ἐάν, but ὅταν, *si*, but *cum*, if he shall appear, as if it were a thing dubious, or only probable, he may come, or he may not come; but *when* he shall appear, as a thing certain and indubitable, and taken for granted by our apostle, that they to whom he wrote were fully convinced of. And so shall I now charitably judge of you, and proceed to the

2. Next particular which is implied, and that is our appearance, in those words, 'before him.' The first coming was to save sinners upon the terms of faith and repentance; his second shall be both to save and destroy: to destroy the incredulous and impenitent, to save the believing and penitent sinners. In order to this it is, that whereas his first coming was to be judged, and so condemned and crucified, his second coming shall be to judge, both by absolving and condemning. That he may perform this office of a judge, there must be a general citation, and consequently appearance of all men before him. When he shall descend from heaven, all shall ascend out of their graves. 'We shall all stand' (so saith St Paul to the Romans, chap. xiv. 10); 'we must all appear' (so is his phrase to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. v. 10), 'before the judgment-seat of Christ.' Nor is this universality only in respect of all sorts of men, but of all persons, *Quicquid hominum univērsis seculis toto orbe progenitum*, as Leo hath fully expressed it,† whatsoever man hath been, is, or shall be born in any age, or part, time, or place of this world, he must necessarily come before this judge at that day. Indeed, some shall have

\* Juan. Carnot, Ep. Serm.

† Leo. Serm.

boldness, and some shall be ashamed, but all shall appear before him. He telleth us himself, Mat. xxv. 32, that 'all nations shall be gathered before him,' both sheep and goats, good and bad. The wicked, indeed, 'shall not stand in the judgment,' Ps. i. 5; that is, they shall fall in their cause, but they shall stand in their persons; desire they will to be hid, though with the fall of heavy mountains upon them, but hid they shall not, cannot be. Every one shall then appear, and that in his own colours: the hypocrite shall appear, not as he seemed to be, but as he is; his vizard shall be plucked off, and his paint melted away, and he shall be stripped of his sheep's clothing. According to what really we have been and done, so shall we in that day appear, and so shall we be judged, for he 'shall reward every man according to his works.'

Oh, then (my brethren), since these things shall be, both that Christ will appear, and then we must appear, 'how holy ought we to be in all manner of conversation!' It will be a sad day with us, if at once it shall be *latere impossibile*, and *apparere intolerabile*, impossible to be concealed, and yet intolerable to appear; if, as we shall not be able to hide, so neither to hold up our heads; in a word, if as we shall have no opportunity of running away, so we shall have no courage to stand. Oh, then, let it be our wisdom beforehand, to make account of, and make preparation for, that appearance! And if you would know how it shall be with you then, often examine how it is with you now. Erect a court of judicature in thine own soul, summon thyself before thyself; if thou beest not able to answer thy conscience, thou wilt be less able to appear before this judge, according as this apostle tells us in the next chapter: 1 John iii. 19, 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.' Oh, then, keep a good conscience, and lead a good life. Order thy steps according to God's word, and gain by faith an interest in Christ's merits. Having begun, continue in the faith and obedience to the death; and being in Christ, abide in him to the end; so shalt thou appear with joy, and not with sorrow, with boldness, and not with shame, before him. And so I am fallen upon the

3. Last particular, which is expressed, namely, the confident appearing before Christ of those who abide in him, 'that we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming;' wherein we shall more particularly take notice of the excellency of the benefit, in those words, 'have confidence, and not be ashamed,' and the extent of the persons to whom this benefit redounds, in the pronoun *we*.

1. The benefit which cometh by abiding in Christ, is set down, according to our apostle's usual way of speaking, both affirmatively and negatively. Nor was it without a special reason, namely, that he might at once set before us both the advantage of perseverance,

and the danger of apostasy, inasmuch as here are two plain assertions: the one, that they who abide in Christ shall have confidence; the other, that they who abide not in him shall be ashamed before him at his coming.

(1.) On the one hand, the persevering Christian shall have *παρρησίαν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ*, confidence before Christ at his coming. I shall not here trouble you with the various significations of this word *παρρησία*, especially since it is so fully done to my hand by the late critical annotator.\* Here it is not unfitly rendered confidence, or boldness. It is by our Saviour expressed in those two phrases of 'lifting up the head,' and 'standing before the Son of man,' Luke xxi. 28, 36. Shame causeth a man to hang down his head, but confidence lifts it up; fear maketh a man run away, but boldness encourageth him to stand. This confident boldness shall they then have, who now abide in him.

It may perhaps be here demanded, How can any, yea, the best Christian, have confidence before Christ at his coming? St Basil, weighing the severity of that day, saith,† that even Abraham, the father of the faithful, should then tremble; and, indeed, considering the exact inspection of the Judge, and the manifold infirmities of the strongest Christians, it may very well be wondered how any of the sons of men should be able to appear then with boldness. But, beloved, notwithstanding this, there are three things which shall make the persevering Christian confident at that day, namely,

[1.] The testimony which his own conscience shall give him of his sincerity. *In die judicii, qualem unusquisque habet conscientiam, talem judicem habebit*, saith St Bernard truly.‡ One of the books which shall at that day be opened, and according to which we shall be judged, is that of conscience; and, as our apostle saith in the next chapter, 1 John iii. 21, 'If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' There is no surer argument of sincerity than constancy; these two are joined together, Ps. lxxviii. 37, 'Their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in covenant.' Their unsteadfastness argued their unsoundness. Surely, then, the conscience of a persevering Christian cannot but bear witness to him of his uprightness. With what confidence doth the church go to God, when she is bold to appeal to him in her affliction, and say, Ps. xlv. 17, 18, 'All this is come upon us, yet we have not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.' Thus can the faithful Christian plead for himself, Blessed Jesus, though the world hath flattered and affrighted me, the devil tempted and solicited me, yet have I not for-

gotten or forsaken thee. I have had many failings in my course, nor can I acquit myself from infirmities; but through thy grace my heart hath not been turned back, nor have my steps declined from thy ways. This is our rejoicing (saith St Paul, 2 Cor. i. 12); yea, this shall be our rejoicing, at that day, 'the testimony of a good conscience.' But yet, let me tell you, this is the weakest prop of a Christian's confidence; and therefore,

[2.] That which, in the next place, will embolden him, is, the right he hath to the promise, even that promise which is mentioned a little before of eternal life, *fidelis est qui promisit, non te fallit, tantum tu noli deficere, sed expecta promissorem*.\* He is faithful that hath promised, and cannot, and will not deceive thee; do not thou faint, and he will not fail thee. Good reason, then, hath he who in some measure fulfilth the condition by abiding in Christ now, with confidence to expect the promise then. Though it is far from him to say in the language of that proud friar, *Da Domine quod ego merui*, Lord, give me what I have deserved, yet he will say with an humble boldness, *Da Domine quod tu promissisti*, Lord, give me what thou hast promised, having confidence, not in the merit of his own works, but the fidelity of Christ's word.

[3.] Add to this, in the last place, the interest which he hath in the Judge. He that is to come to judge the world is the head of his church, and consequently all who abide in him are his members. He that then shall appear as the judge, now appeareth in heaven as an advocate for all believers. Finally, he that shall be the judge is a friend, a brother, an husband; they that abide in him are the children of God, and so he and they brethren; are beloved of him, and so he is their friend; married to him, and so he is their husband. Well may they with confidence appear before him. Being thus married to, and abiding in, Christ, their sins are washed away in his blood, their persons are invested with his merits. And thus through him it is, that, abiding in him, they have confidence before him.

(2.) On the other hand, they who do not abide in him shall be ashamed before him at his coming. I find among expositors a threefold gloss upon this, *ἀισχυνοῦσθαι μὲν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*, 'ashamed before him.'

[1.] Erasmus conceiveth the sense may be,† *ut illum non pudeat nostri*, that he may not be ashamed of us. This is that which himself threateneth, by way of retaliation to all them who are ashamed of him and his words (and consequently do not abide in him), that when he shall come in the glory of his Father, he will be ashamed of them, Luke ix. 26. They who now will not own Christ, at that time would gladly be owned by him; but he shall dismiss them to their place with a *Nescio vos*, 'I know you not.' But

\* Dr Ham. Annotat. on the Seventh Chapter of St John.

† Bas. Hexam. hom. xi.

‡ Bern. de modo bene viv. Serm. lxxi.

\* Aug in loc.

† Eras. in loc.



though this be true in itself, yet the phrase of the text will not well bear it.

[2.] The Syriac and vulgar Latin read it,\* as if the preposition were *ὑπὲρ*, and so the sense is, *ne nos aeterna infamia damnet*, that we may not be doomed to eternal infamy, with that *Ite maledicti*, 'Go, ye cursed.' All impenitent sinners, and especially apostates, shall in that day, by Christ, be put to, and clothed with, shame. Thus what they seek to avoid, falls upon them, and that in a worse kind; apostates deny Christ to prevent shame, and because of their apostasy they suffer perpetual shame.

[3.] The most genuine notion of the phrase is rendered by Grotius,† *Ne pudeat nos ab illo conspici*, that we may not be ashamed to be seen by him. The wicked, especially apostates, shall be ashamed at that day before the godly, whom here they despised. So the author of the book of Wisdom‡ brings them in, saying within themselves, This was he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach; we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour; how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints! But which is far worse, they shall be ashamed before Christ whom here they deserted, and not be able to look him in the face. Thus shall all that forsake Christ be ashamed before him, in respect of their,

1. Odious nakedness. Time was when bodily nakedness was our honour, but now it is so shameful that we need garments to cover us; and surely if the nakedness of the body be shameful, that of the soul is far worse. How can the apostate choose then but be ashamed before Christ, whilst by casting him off he hath thrown away that white raiment which should cover him, and his shameful nakedness must needs appear.

2. Gross hypocrisy. The cheating impostor, when discovered and brought before the judge, is ashamed; the apostate proclaimeth to all the world that his profession was but a cheat, his devotion a lie, and must he not needs be ashamed when he shall appear before Christ?

3. Vile unfaithfulness. He that hath broke his word is ashamed to look him in the face to whom he made the promise; the servant that hath not discharged his trust is ashamed to come before his master; with what face can that woman look upon her husband, which hath been unfaithful to his bed? Apostates are spiritual adulterers, forsaking Christ for other lovers; false servants, not keeping that good thing which is committed to them; yea, perfidious in their promises, renouncing their baptismal vow. Sure they cannot but be ashamed before Christ.

4. Great unthankfulness. He that having received kindness returneth injury, may well blush to look his benefactor in the face. *Non referre gratias de bene-*

\* Syr. Vulg. Lat. Beza, *ibid.*

‡ Wisd. v. 3, 4, 5.

† Grot. in loc.

*ficio, turpe est*, saith Seneca,\* it is a filthy, and consequently shameful, thing, not to render thanks for benefits conferred, much more to repay them with injuries. No wonder then if the apostate be ashamed before Christ, whom he hath most ungratefully forsaken, renouncing allegiance to this King of glory; not only notwithstanding his own oath, but many and great favours conferred by this King upon him.

5. Manifest folly. All acts of inconsiderate folly are grounds of shame. That language of the fool, *Non putaram*, I did not think, may well be uttered with blushing. What blushing shall then sit upon the faces of apostates at that day, when they shall too late see how they were cheated by the sophistries of the devil, enchantments of the world, and fallacies of their own corrupt hearts, so as to forsake the fountain of living waters for a broken cistern, and to choose death rather than life!

Oh that all backsliding apostates would think they heard this judge upbraiding them at that day with this or the like language: What didst thou mean, O thou naked, hypocritical, perfidious, ungrateful, foolish sinner, to go from me? Did not I offer myself, my merits, my righteousness to clothe thee? But thou hast cast away my righteousness, wouldst have none of me, and now thou art shamefully naked. Didst thou not for a time make a large profession of my name and truth? but without any just reason thou hast relinquished it, whereby it appeareth thou wert no other than a whited sepulchre. Didst thou not by thy sureties promise at thy baptism, and afterwards at my table engage thyself to my service? But none of those oaths have been cords strong enough to hold thee. Could I do more for thee than that I did, in laying down my life for thee; and is this thy requital, to deny me, and by that denial to crucify me afresh? Dost thou not see what thou hast done, by leaving me to embrace this present world, made a cursed exchange of gold for dross, pearls for pebbles; thy pleasures are vanished, thy hopes disappointed, and thyself shamefully deceived. And now, oh that we would all lay to heart, *Quæ tunc erit fidei gloria, quæ pœna perfidiæ cum judicii dies venerit*, to use St Cyprian's language,‡ what shall be the glory of the faithful, and the ignominy of the perfidious; the honour of constancy, and the reproach of apostasy in that day! What a dark, gloomy, dreadful day it shall be to them that forsake Christ! what a bright, splendid, joyful day it shall be to them that abide in him! and which is better, judge you. It is before Christ himself, and that as sitting on his throne of glory, we must then appear; and what a sad thing will it be to have shame and confusion then sit upon thy face! If therefore thou wouldst stand then, do not run away now; if you would then lift up your heads, do not now turn your backs; now 'abide in him, that you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.'

\* Sen. l. de Benef.

‡ Cypr. ad Demetr.

2. There is only one thing remaineth to be despatched, and that is, the extent of the persons, in that the verb is in the *first* person plural, ἐζωμεν, 'we may have,' I and you, whereby the apostle intimateth that his confidence or shame at Christ's coming did much depend upon their abiding, or not abiding, in him.

On the one hand, the people's constancy shall then be the pastor's glory; in which respect St Paul calleth the Philippians his 'joy and his crown,' chap. iv. 1; and he saith of the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20, 'For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy.' They were not only his joy, but his glory; not only his glory, but his crown of glorying (for so the Greek is best rendered), of whom he should glory at the last day as his crown. *Labor discipuli, in opere bono, coronam dat magistro, judice Christo*, saith St Ambrose, the scholar's labour shall be the master's honour in the judgment of Christ.

On the other hand, the people's apostasy shall then be the minister's ignominy. 'A foolish son,' saith the wise man, Prov. xix. 13, 'is a calamity'—ἀσχηβνη, so the Septuagint reads it, a disgrace—to his father.' So are a foolish, giddy people to their spiritual father. Indeed, if the minister discharge his duty, he shall not have any cause of shame as to himself, as if he had been negligent or unfaithful; but he shall be ashamed of the people, and as it were unwilling to own them. The barren tree reproacheth the gardener, the ignorant scholar disgraceth his teacher; and though the righteous Judge will not lay the people's apostasy to the charge of the faithful minister, yet thereby his glorying is made void.

And therefore, my dearly beloved, if you have any reverence to the Judge before whom you must appear, if you have any respect to your minister, who would gladly then have cause to boast of you, and if you have any regard to your own comfort, honour, happiness in that day when you shall appear before Christ, I exhort, entreat, beseech you, that you would adhere constantly to, and abide firmly in, him whom you have believed, to the end of your days.

And thus, through divine assistance, I am come to the end of this excellent period. There is indeed another verse in this chapter; but as Beza well glosseth,\* it is *transitio ad sequentem exhortationem*, a passage to the following exhortation, and begins that discourse which is prosecuted in several verses of the next chapter; and therefore, with Cajetan,† I shall look upon it rather as the first verse of that than the last of this. Nothing therefore now remaineth but that, as I trust you have hitherto, so to beg of you that you would still renew your prayers to God for me, that (if it be his will, and may be for his glory and the church's good) I may make further progress, and in due time finish this work of expounding this epistle. And may both you and I so walk in those steps of this way, namely, confessing and forsaking our sins, keeping Christ's commandments, and imitation of his pattern; love of our brother, contempt of the world, and perseverance in the faith of Christ, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. Amen, amen.

\* Beza in loc.

† Cajet. in loc.



# AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE OF THE CHIEFEST THINGS HANDLED IN THE BOOK.

---

- ABUSE**, the, of a thing is no just reason of a total disuse, 216.
- Abiding in Christ**, *see* perseverance.
- Adultery** a lust of the flesh, 253.
- Advocate**, how affirmed of Christ, how of the Holy Ghost, 124; how Christ's Advocateship differs from his mediators-hip, 125; he the only advocate, 129; wherein it consists, *ib.*; with whom he is an advocate, 126; what giveth efficacy to it, *ib.*, 130; he is no patron of sin, though advocate for sinners, 125; he is no advocate for them that continue in sin, 123; we must be advocates for Christ, 129.
- Affections**, the, are in themselves indifferent, 253.
- Afflictions** compared to darkness, 57; Christians rejoice in them, 43; the word of God comforts in them, 46; for sin, inflicted even on forgiven persons, 105.
- Age**, the, of man threefold, 269.
- All things**, in what sense believers know, 322.
- Ambition**, spiritual, commendable, 70; a great sin, 268.
- Angels**, Christ's death in some sense sufficient to redeem the fallen angels, 140; yet not applicable to them, 141.
- Anger**, God's, how terrible, 131; sin the cause of it, *ib.*; God's anger against forgiven sinners is not judicial, but paternal, 220.
- Another's**, to desire what is, how lawful, and unlawful, 261.
- Anointing**, *see* Unction.
- Antichrists** foretold by Christ, 300; two sorts of them, *ib.*; many of them in the apostles' time, 301; who is so most properly, 299.
- Antiquity**, a note of verity, 33; what kind of antiquity is so, *ib.*; is that which is from the beginning, 170, 173.
- Apostasy**, its causes, 304; how far incident to the true members of the church, 310; if total, an argument of hyper-crisy, 312; by it men are discovered to be hypocrites, 313; it is either from the faith or communion of the church, 304; we should not be much dismayed although we behold men apostatising, 110; apostates shall be ashamed at Christ's coming, 384.
- Apostles**, the meanness of their outward condition, 51; their integrity and unblameableness, 30; Christ's witness, 12; their continual converse with him, 27; why needful, 28.
- Apparel** in itself indifferent, 27; when too costly, too fashionable, sinful, *ib.*; a base thing to be proud of, *ib.*
- Appearing of Christ**, *see* Coming; when he shall appear, we must all appear before him, 382.
- Arrogancy** puffeth men up with self-conceit, 268; a cause of hereby, 305.
- Assurance** a reflex knowledge, 161; is only in respect of ourselves, *ib.*; it is not merely conjectural, ner yet perfect, 162; many have it not who yet are in Christ, *ib.*; it is attainable, and being attained, exceeding comfortable, 163; by what means, 164.
- BLASPHEMY** worse than atheism, 281.
- Blood of Christ**, how taken in Scripture, 75; how often shed, *ib.*; how it cleanseth from sin, 76.
- Boasting of ourselves** an effect of pride, 269.
- Brother**, in what sense all men, and more especially all Christians, are brethren, 187; more particularly ministers and people, 167.
- Brotherly love**, *see* Love.
- CHILDREN**, regenerate persons must be as such, 116; they must reverence their parents, 118; how great care ought to be taken for their instruction, 214, 242; ought to know their heavenly Father, and why, 243; in what respect we must be like them, and in what not, 206.
- Christ**, why called the Word, 17; the subject of the whole Scripture, 19; how the life, the eternal life, 20; his eternal subsistence from the beginning, 22, 31; truly man, 29; God and man in one person, *ib.*; 212, how he was visible, 27; his excellent preaching, 26; his unspeakable dignity, *ib.*; his fitness for the work of our redemption, 23; promised before sent, 19; our miserable condition without him, 20, 133; in what respects said to be righteous, 139; the only refuge of a wounded conscience, 124; the parallel between him and the mercy-seat, 133; his great love to sinners, 78; no fellowship with God but through him, 39; no salvation but through him, 137; a perfect pattern of grace, 158; in what sense the image of God, 342; how from the beginning, 226; the holy one, 319; his great love to us, 179.
- Christians**, their dignity, 48; their charity in desiring others may partake with them, 35, 136; what is done to them reflects on Christ, 40; Christ to be manifested in their lives, 25; how said to be in Christ, 154; and to abide in him, 155, 379; the felicity of their being and abiding in him, 155; they are in vain so called who are not like to Christ, 160; they are of different degrees, 207; they have an unction, 318; their state far better than that of the Jews, 374.
- Church**, many in it who are not of it, 309; many in it who depart from it, 303; the degrees of casting out of it, *ib.*; particular churches have their periods, 297; multitude no note of a true one, 301; the Christian in itself a great multitude, 140.
- Civility**, how differenced from sanctity, 67.
- Cleansing from sin** twofold, 14; the causes of it, 76.
- Commandments of God**, joined with promises, 50; how conversant about things impossible, 83; many think they keep them all, 91.
- Commands given by Christ**, as well as promises, 146; they must be obeyed, because they are his, *ib.*; in what sense impossible to be obeyed, 147; why they are called his word, 152.
- Coming of Christ** threefold, 381; his personal double, *ib.*; one end of his first is to be an example, 158; the difference between his first and second coming, 382.
- Company**, evil, to be avoided, 245, 258, 366; especially that of heretics, 361.

- Communion with God and Christ, and the saints, *see* Fellowship.
- Conceit, self, *see* Arrogance.
- Concupiscence, *see* Lust.
- Confession threefold, 95; of sin necessary to remission, and how, 100; it brings glory to God, 102; benefit to us, 101; the devil an enemy to it, 102; it must be particular, 95; chiefly of our own sins, 96; to whom to be made, 97; its antecedent, ingredients, consequent, 98; to be performed by the holiest, 82; of Christ when called to it, necessary, and why, 343.
- Confidence, whence that ariseth which persevering believers shall have at the last day, 383.
- Constancy, *see* Perseverance.
- Contempt of the world required of Christians, 247.
- Contentation with our condition a choice virtue, 265.
- Conversion maketh an alteration, 71; others' must be desired by us, 35.
- Conversation of Christians ought to be exemplary, 66.
- Covenant of grace double, one general, the other special, 141.
- Covetousness, why called a lust of the eyes, in what it consists, 262; an universal disease, 263; insatiable, 264; enslaving, *ib.*; opposed to all the beatitudes, 265; breaketh all the commandments, 277; a cause of heresies, 205.
- Creatures, all of them may be our teachers, 205.
- Curiosity of knowing, of seeing, condemned, 259, &c.; one cause of heresy, 304.
- DARKNESS** fourfold, 56.
- Death; of Christ in our stead, for our sins, our discharge, 76; what gave the merit to it, 78; no benefit by it to wicked men, 80; puts an end to all worldly lusts, 286; befalleth the righteous as well as the wicked, 291; ought to be daily meditated on, and that by the youngest, 298.
- Deceive, man apt to deceive himself, 89; the more need to beware of it, 91; there are many deceivers, 89.
- Delights, the difference between spiritual and carnal, 235; they end in misery, 288.
- Denial, of Christ, how many ways, 339; it is a denial of the whole Trinity, 340; how denied as the Son of God, 343.
- Desire after the things of this world when inordinate, 246.
- Despair, antidotes against it, Christ's blood, 79; his advocacy, 128; his propitiation, 135; especially the universality of it, 141; despair and presumption are two dangerous rocks, 122.
- Devil, the, is subtle as well as malicious, 258; his aim is to hinder us from the word, 237; he taketh advantage against us from ourselves, 258; he stirreth up evil lusts in men, 281; he is the wicked one, how he came to be so, and in what respects he is so, 231, &c.; we ought to fight with him, 234; our best weapon against him is faith, 235.
- Doctrines must be examined in their consequences, 341.
- Drunkness a lust of the flesh, wherein the sin consists, 254.
- ENVY**, *see* Hatred.
- Epicures please all their senses, 259.
- Epistle, the first, of John a touchstone, 142.
- Epistles, their use, 3.
- Eternity puts a value upon things, 294, 368; this world so much the more transitory when compared with it, 293; Christians of all others obliged to seek after it, 294.
- Eternal life twofold, 352; why that life must be so, 353; it is the choice excellency of that life, 354; it is the promise, 355; made by Christ most clearly, 356; to them that persevere, 357.
- Examination of ourselves is that in which we ought to be very serious, 165.
- Examples, we are apt to follow bad ones, 282.
- Excelling, when the desire of it is sinful, 268.
- Excuse, men apt to make, for their sins, 96; by transferring the fault on others, 97; the sins of the godly no excuse for the wicked, 86.
- Exordiums, the properties of them, 11.
- FAITH**, why called knowledge, 144; it uniteth us to Christ, 155; it produceth three sorts of effects, 164; in exercising its reflex act, we must not neglect its direct, 166; of great use in resisting the devil, 235; opposed by the devil, 345; it cometh by hearing, 347.
- Falling away, *see* Apostasy.
- Falls; saints may fall grossly, 123; fear of falling a preservative, *ib.*
- Father, when applied to God, how taken, 21; how God is our Father, and how Christ's, 126; fathers' love to their children, 118, 127; God cannot be now rightly worshipped but as the Father of Christ, 341; in denying the Son the Father is denied, 339; several sorts of fathers, 208; perfect Christians compared to fathers, *ib.*
- Faith, the Christian's spiritual sense, 31; the means of fellowship with God, 34; it applieth, but doth not appropriate Christ, 17; no salvation but by faith in Christ, 137; greatly upbagned by the devil, 48; it is neither unmanly nor uncharitable, 386; the only instrument of pardon, 100.
- Faithfulness, God's, in performing his promises, 111; ground of faith, 112; man's required in imitation of God's, *ib.*
- Fellowship between saints, 34; with God and Christ, wherein it consists, 37; we may have it as well as the apostles, 34; how with the Father, 37; how with Christ, 38; earnestly to be desired, 42; the difficulty of attaining it, 72; impossible to men continuing in their sins, 62.
- Flesh, a threefold acceptance of it, 252; several lusts of the flesh, *ib.*
- Forgiveness of sin, the nature of it, 105; why called cleansing, 106; God's prerogative, 109; God's faithfulness obligeth him to it, 112; it is just with God to forgive sin, and how, 113; mercy the impulsive cause in respect of us, 112; it is only of sin past, 107; its universal extent, *ib.*; how consistent with afflictions for sin, 105; how different from forbearing, *ib.*; earnestly to be longed after, 106; man's required in imitation of God's, 110; of sin taketh off the obligation to punishment, 220; may be considered three ways, 221; a special mercy, *ib.*; a great honour to God, 222; he is engaged to it by promise, *ib.*; it is for Christ's sake, *ib.*; an obligation to repentance and love, 223.
- Fornication a sinful lust of the flesh, 253.
- Forsaking sin to be joined with confession, 99; the truest part of repentance, 119; how far it is required, 120.
- GENTILES**, as well as Jews, capable of the merit of Christ's death, 139.
- Gluttony a sinful lust of the flesh, 254.
- Gnostics, their impurity, 62; their pretences of purity, 88.
- God, all good in him, 43; why compared to light, 52; how manifesting himself in the incarnation, 24; no author of sin, 54; from the beginning, 226.
- Gospel, why called the word of life, 15; its excellency above the law, 16, 49, 130; accidentally the savour of death, 16; chiefly promissory, 49; a doctrine of joy, 44; its antiquity, 32; its doctrines, made by wicked men encouragements to sin, 121; whereaa they are arguments against sin, *ib.*; though a refuge when we have sinned, 130; hath law in it, 169; the true light, and why, 327; the truth, 327; of divine original, 328; leadeth us to Christ, and by him to God, 350.
- Grace, the difference between sincere and counterfeit grace, 67, *see* Holiness; if true, cannot consist with the dominion of



- any sin, 315; it is of great worth, 316; to be preserved and employed by us, 318, 320, 369; we must concur with it, 379; it is not always discerned by them who have it, 166; may be known whether true or counterfeit, 164; all graces are connex, 161; we must not be proud of it, 272; a little must not content us, nor yet discourage us, 209; we must grow in it, 212.
- HAPPINESS** of that other life cannot be expressed, 352.
- Hatred** of our brother an heinous sin, wherein it consists, 194; he that is guilty of it may yet think his estate good, 198; but he is really very bad, *ib.*
- Hearing**, the sense of knowledge, faith, 346; it must be with our heart and foot, as well as ear, 347.
- Heathen**, their condition to be pitied, 138.
- Heresy**, the cause of it, 304; those which are fundamental are to be most opposed, 334.
- Heretics**, being erroneous themselves, seduce others, 360; they are cunning to seduce, 361; very tenacious of their errors, 349; they are liars and antichrists, 333.
- Hide our sins** from God, we cannot, 95.
- Holiness**, God's, why compared to light, 53; all holiness from him, 54, 69; man's holiness, why resembled by light, and by what light, 67; how it fits for fellowship with God, 72.
- Humility** maketh men low-conceited of themselves, 90; the remainders of sin in us should make us humble, 86; we are obliged to it, both as men and Christians, 272.
- Hypocrites** the worst of sinners, 56; sharply to be reprov'd, *ib.*; they are best conceited of themselves, *ib.*; they say they have no sin, 88; they pretend to fellowship with God, 61; the most miserable men, 65; the contrariety of their conversation to their profession, 64; pretend to great measures of illumination, 148.
- IDLENESS**, a sinful lust of the flesh, 256.
- Ignorance** compared to darkness, 57; affected, damnable, 63; several kinds of it, 330; the causes of it, 331; most odious in old men, 228.
- Illumination** of the mind, no less needful than the outward revelation, 324.
- Image** of God, what it is, 37.
- Imitation** of God required, 70; of Christ hath a limitation, 156; how far extended, 158; it cannot be exact, *ib.*; ought to be endeavoured, 159; our relation to, and union with Christ, obligeth to it, *ib.*
- Imputation** of Christ's righteousness to us, how it cometh to pass, 155.
- Incarnation**, why called a manifestation, 23; why the second person incarnate, 24.
- Incest**, a sinful lust of the flesh, 253.
- Inconstancy** in religion hemoaned, 348.
- Infidelity**, it maketh God a liar, 94.
- Infirmities**, to be altogether without them the privilege of heaven, 82, 124; they accompany our best duties, 85; they hinder not fellowship with God, 79; they ought to be bewailed, 121; but yet must not too much discourage us, 87.
- Interpretation** of Scripture not to be attempted by every man, 216.
- JESUITS**, their arrogancy in assuming that title to themselves, 38.
- Jesus**, that such a person there was, 334; that he is the Christ, *ib.*
- John**, his humility, 7; prudence, 8; innocency, *ib.*; his first epistle, the scope of it, 5, 48; the comprehensiveness of it, 6; why called catholic, 9.
- Joy**, it is that which all men seek after, 41; Christianity doth not abolish it, 44; the difference between worldly and spiritual joy, 42, 43; spiritual joy is fixed on God, and Christ, 42, 43; it supports in all afflictions, *ib.*; three things concur to it, 161.
- Judge**, how Christ both judge and advocate, 125; we must not judge according to outward shows, 61; our own frailties should make us judge charitably of others, 86, 123.
- Judgments**, God giveth warning of them before he sends them, 302.
- Justice** of God appeareth both in forgiving penitents and punishing of the impenitent, 115.
- Justification** and sanctification inseparable, 104.
- Justiciaries**, their self-conceit, 88; the causes of it, 90.
- KINGDOMS** have their periods, 266.
- Knowledge** not available without practice, 68; it must be communicated to others, 13; of God, how to be attained, 54; of sin, an antecedent to confession, 98; very amiable, 148, 331; especially that of Christ, 148, 228; what it imports to know Christ, 144; twofold, 227, 149; how differeced, 150; if only speculative, it is not right, and will but aggravate our condemnation, *ib.*; it must be joined with obedience, 142, 290; if right, it is the mother of obedience, 143; puts us on love to Christ, 149, 230; in what sense Christians know all things, and with what knowledge, 322; the means of attaining it, 332; we still need instruction, *ib.*
- LAST** times, those from the first to the second coming of Christ, 296; we must look upon every day as our last, 298.
- Law**, in comparison of the gospel, darkness, 81.
- Life eternal** to be sought after, 6; how great the joy of it, 44; in what respects through Christ, 20.
- Life**, why that future bliss so called, 352; that far excels this, 354; this transitory, 286; too much doated on, 354; threefold, 225.
- Lie**, wicked men fasten on God, 92; hypocrisy a real lie, 64; two things concur to a lie, 62; three sorts of lies, 64; threefold, 149, 329; liars the vilest of men, 333.
- Light**, threefold, 66.
- Love**, the nature of it in general, 246.
- Love**; of God to man twofold, 131, 134; the effect of a right knowledge, *ib.*; it renders our obedience acceptable, 62; what perfection of it is attainable, 153; he is to be loved chiefly as a father, 275; it cannot consist with, but casts out the love of the world, *ib.*
- Love** of our brother, the old commandment, 170; nothing added to it by Christ, 175; in what sense a new commandment, 176; it prevents many sins and scandals, 190; he that loveth is in the light, 189; wherein brotherly love consists, 182.
- Love** of the world, *see* World.
- Lust**, threefold, 250; that which was in us by creation was not prone to irregularity, 280; forbidden, as well as the outward act, 272; after worldly things many times disappointed, and if fulfilled, soon glutted, 285.
- MALICE**, *see* Hatred.
- Marriage** may be unlawfully used, 254.
- Mean things** made choice of to be Christ's instruments, and why, 51.
- Mediatorship** only belonging to Christ, 39; how different from his advocation, 125.
- Memory** apt to forget divine things, 332; we must not only hear, but remember, 347.
- Men**, ranked into two sorts, 71.
- Metaphors** must be familiar, 51.
- Ministers**, must be sent, 13; they must be assured of the truth of what they deliver, 30; what they declare to

others must be received from Christ, 50; they must give every one their due, 52; their language must be plain, 18; their aim is to beat down sin, 120; they must use mildness in their instructions, 119; fathers to the people, and how, 117; their great love to the people, 118; their care of, and joy in the people's welfare, 46, 47; they must seek the people's benefit, 35; to be honoured, and revered, and obeyed, 16, 118; how far confession to be made to them, 97; what their power in forgiving, 109; how they and the people brethren, 167; must have a fatherly affection to the people, 206; they are watchmen and shepherds, 204; must be faithful and prudent, 230; must preach particularly, 213, 266; seasonably, suitably to their auditors' conditions, capacities, 230; make a distinction between hearers, 332; warn the people of seducers, 333, 364; commend what is good in their people, 184; must win upon them by expressing love, 378; their endeavour shall be accepted, 360; no need of them in heaven, 372; they are instituted by Christ to continue in the church to the end of the world, 373; their teaching cannot avail without the Spirit, 352; they must be constant in the faith, 349; their people's constancy their honour at the last day, 385; they must live their sermons, 180.

Miracles, by true ones the gospel was confirmed, 328; the show of them made a prop of heresy, 362.

Morality, how different from sanctity, 67.

Multitude no note of a true church, 301.

NAME, it is prudence sometimes to conceal it, 8; its several acceptions, 222; when changed in Scripture, some spiritual gift conferred, 339; the names of those whom we reprove not to be mentioned, 225, 358.

Necessity twofold, 350.

Neutrality and lukewarmness condemned, 278.

Novelty a badge of error, affecting it dangerous, 170, 173.

OBEEDIENCE, the properties of it represented by walking, 68; cannot be without knowledge, 149; the way to increase knowledge, 143; it is according to our knowledge, 147; negatives not sufficient, 146, 293; must be universal, 147, 290; cheerful, *ib.*; by it we know our interest in Christ, 154; it cannot be exact, 147; a bare command should be enough to oblige to it, 279; it is the best trial of our love to God, 293; and perfects it, 152.

Old men, why called fathers, 209; to be revered, 210; they had need to be good, 211; not too old to learn, 213; ignorance in them inexcusable, 228; they must labour to know Christ, *ib.*

Omniscency, God's attribute, 52.

Original sin remaining in the best, 52.

Overcome, in what sense we are said to overcome the devil now, 233; we are not complete victors in this life, 234; how it is to be done, *ib.*

PAPISTS, we dare vie with them in the point of antiquity, 33.

Pardon of sin, *see* Forgiveness.

Perfection twofold, 153; perfect Christians compared to fathers, 208.

Perseverance in adhering to Christ, the church, the truth received, 347, 379; it must be to the end, 380; most commendable in apostatising times, 346; it is not by ourselves, but God's sustentation, 311; the doctrine of it, upon what grounds built, *ib.*; no true cause of security, 313; an attendant of true grace, 345.

Play, how unlawful, 256.

Polygamy a lust of the flesh, 253.

Praise due to virtue, 134, 225, 330.

Preacher, *see* Minister.

Precepts, *see* Commandments.

Predictions, the verity of those which are divine, 300; especially concerning Christ, 335.

Presumption, the grounds of it, 60; the difference between presumptuous sinners and weak saints, 94; Christ's universal propitiation no just cause of it, 142; of an interest in Christ, 165; of our own abilities, 268.

Pride, spiritual, what should abase it, 41; loveth to shew itself, 266; why called pride of life, 267; its several kinds, *ib.*; a general sin, 271; maketh a man like the devil, *ib.*; it is attended with shame, *ib.*

Privileges, the enjoyment of them should not content us, 310.

Profession without practice a lie, 63, 64; the loose conversation of professors, how great a dishonour to God, religion, and injury to themselves, 65.

Promises, their worth, 50; benefit, 19, 108; free, and yet conditional, 50; divine, are sometimes matter of precept, 378; suitable to our necessities, 350; most faithful, 356; the promise is eternal life, 355; first promised and then given, 356; to them that persevere, 357; promised before Christ, but not so clearly as by him, 356; human oft-times larger than their performances, 270, 355.

Propitiation, *see* reconciliation; Christ is the propitiation, 130, 132; the several causes of it, 134.

Protestants unjustly charged by the papists as schismatics, 305.

Punishment of the guiltless, how consistent with God's justice, 113; of the godly, how consistent with forgiveness, 105.

Purposes, without performances, unavailable, 68.

QUAKERS, how irrationally they decry the ministry, and blasphemously they wrest Scripture, 374.

REASON, of what use in divine things, 325; insufficient without a higher light, 326; pretended to by heretics, 362.

Reconciliation is of God to man, as well as man to God, 132; merited only by Christ, 134; attributed both to his sacrifice and intercession, 130; God being our Father, very willing to it, 127.

Redemption, in what sense universal, 140.

Regeneration compared to light, 183.

Religion, Christian, continually proposed, 31.

Remission of sin, *see* Forgiveness.

Repentance abstaineth from all sort of lusts, 272; the delay of it dangerous, 240.

Repetition of one and the same thing frequently used in holy writ, and why, 192.

Reproof must be plain, 55; gentle, 56; with respect to the difference of sinners, *ib.*; how profitable, 10; ought to be with expression of love, 206; and yet sharp against notorious sinners, 334; but yet without naming the persons, 225, 358.

Resolution necessary in a Christian to his combat with the devil, 235.

Resurrection of Christ, how proved, 38.

Riches, when got and kept sinfully, 262.

SACRAMENT of the Lord's Supper, no corporeal presence in it, 29; what gesture was used by Christ is not certain, if it were, we are not bound to follow it, 157.

Sacrifices all looked at Christ, 133.

Saints may fall grossly, 123: their security, dignity, and felicity by reason of the anointing, 315.

Schism, the causes of it, 304; a great sin, 307; unjustly charged upon the protestants by the papists, 305; justly by us upon the sectaries, 307.

Salvation only by Christ, 137.

Satisfaction made by Christ to God's justice, 114; how consistent with remission, *ib.*



- Scriptures, their fulness, sufficiency, 7, 116; they consist of three parts, 5; the certainty of apostolical writings, 30; God's mercy in giving them to us, 9, 14; some parts more useful than others, 55; fulness of joy afforded by them, 54; to be read by the vulgar, 45; why God would have his word written, 212; man the penman, God's Spirit the author, 213; to be read by and to all, 215; with reverence, 213; quoted and wrested by the devil, 238; by heretics, 331, 374; a special weapon against seducers, 364.
- Sectaries justly accused as schismatics, 307.
- Security greatest when judgment is nearest, 298.
- Seducers, they often prove such who should be teachers, 359; the several ways of seducing, 362.
- Senses, the validity of a testimony from them, 15.
- Sights, wanton forbidden, 258; as also such as curiosity prompts to, 260.
- Signs, three sorts of them, 301.
- Shame, when of confessing sin, bad, 95.
- Sin, to sin, how taken in Scripture, 345; it is a wandering, 103; why called unrighteousness, *ib.*; it maketh a man a debtor, 104; it rendereth us filthy in God's sight, 106; the soul's sickness, 116; compared to darkness, 57; the great guilt of it, 78; the only makebait, 131; God cannot be the author of it, 54, 280; all men by nature sinners, 82; the holiest not without it here, *ib.*; from gross sins they may be free, 83; the sins of the godly no excuse for the wicked, 85; Christ a propitiation for the greatest sins, 136; men are apt to transfer it on God, 281; it maketh us like the devil, 233; it ruineth churches and kingdoms, 297; how many ways to be considered, 219.
- Sleep, when a lust of the flesh, 256.
- Son, how distinct from and one with the Father, 22; to be worshipped as the Father, 24; how inferior to the Father, 126.
- Son of God, Christ was in such a way as proveth him higher than men, nay, angels, yea, the high God, 342; he that denieth Christ denieth God's Son, 340; how much God is offended with it, 342.
- Soul, no proportion between it and the world, 287; hath its diseases as well as the body, 378.
- Spirit of God compared to oil, and why, 315, &c.; given by Christ, 320, 367; the author of Scripture, 213; is not only illuminating but confirming, 377; his grace needful to overcome the devil, 236; his teaching extraordinary and ordinary, internal and external, 369; his inward teaching agreeth with that in the word, 370; it is faithful, 376; effectual, *ib.*; how he concurrerth to assurance, 165.
- Strength, spiritual needful to our fight with the devil, 235; wherein it consists, *ib.*; strong Christians compared to young men, 208.
- Superfluity, what measure of riches is so, 261.
- Superiors ought to be exemplary, 154.
- TEACHING, *see* Spirit, Ministers.
- Tempting God a great sin, 260.
- Testament, the difference between the New and the Old, 16, 18; our happiness, who live in the times of the New, 19.
- Trinity illustrated by the metaphor of light, 52.
- Truth, threefold, 63; to do the truth what, *ib.*; of the gospel proved, 328.
- Types fulfilled in Christ, 827.
- Union of the sick in the primitive times for another end than that of the papists, 366; in baptism, ancient, but not apostolical, *ib.*; spiritual is not of ourselves, 367; abideth in the church and every true member, 368.
- Union with Christ intimate and indissoluble, 155; expressed by three phrases, 379.
- Unregeneracy a state of darkness, 183; of walking in darkness, 201.
- VAIN-GLORY a branch of pride, 269
- Victory, *see* Overcome.
- WALKING, what it imports, 58.
- Watchful, we ought to be, because prone to sin, 87.
- Weak Christians, in what respects compared to little children, 207.
- Wicked men delight in sin, 58; make it their course, *ib.*; grow worse and worse, 59; their miserable estate, *ib.*; they cannot have communion with God, 68.
- Will, both in good and evil is looked upon though there be no deed, 234, 290; of God's decree done by wicked men against their will, 289; of his command ought to be done by us willingly, 290.
- Wisdom, divine, teacheth the vanity of the world, 287.
- Witness, how many ways we bear to Christ, 12.
- Word of God, a great mercy that it is written, 9, 14; the rule of truth, 93; as it is among us, so it must be in us, *ib.*; a preservative against sin, and accordingly to be made use of, 121; consists of three parts, 236; it must abide in us, and how we may know whether it do, 237; overcometh the devil, *ib.*
- World, taken two ways, 215; a book, 371; it passeth away, 283; an impostor, 284; it seemeth permanent in our eye, 286; a dangerous enemy, 295.
- Worldly things, the having them dangerous, 274; occasions of lust, 282; to be used, not loved, 246; they pass away in themselves from their owners, and that suddenly, 284; they leave us when most need, 288; how of God, how not, 279.
- Worldly love, wherein it consists, 246; how discovered, 247; an epidemical disease, *ib.*; unsuitable to a Christian, 282; cannot consist with the love of God, 275; hardly subdued, 273; hindereth the efficacy of the word, 276; a cause of apostasy, profaneness, 277.
- Words nothing without works, 68.
- World, made by Christ, 18; how Christ a propitiation for the whole world, 140.
- Writing, the advantage of it, 13.
- Writings, what commendeth them, 212; why God would have his word written, *ib.*
- YEARS, there are members of the church of all years, 211.
- Young men, the devil a great enemy to them, 238; prone to many lusts, 239; put off the serving of God, 240 persuaded to resist the devil, *ib.*











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